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THE HUNGER OF THE . . HEART . . .

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TO THE MEMORY OF MY WIFE
I DEDICATE THESE PAGES
REDOLENT OF HER LIFE
AND DEATH.

PREFACE.

THE reader will discern that behind what is presented to him there lies an experience.

With Tennyson,

“I sometimes hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel ;
For words, like Nature, half reveal
And half conceal the Soul within.”

“But for the unquiet heart and brain
A use in measured language lies ;
The sad mechanic exercise,
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.”

And so it has been a species of relief to brood over the chaos of emotion, and reduce to some degree of clearness and order what I at first dimly and confusedly felt. Moreover, I will count it a second benefit to myself if the experience enshrined in these pages confirm the faith of the tempted, or minister any measure of consolation to the wounded spirit ; and so, in my case also, the saying prove itself true :

“They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.”

Whatever may be said of the manner in which they have been treated, the subjects themselves are all of universal interest; but some are such as should appeal to the bereaved in particular.

I am deeply conscious of the difficulty, as well as of the importance, of the questions raised, and also of the inadequacy of these attempts to deal with them; yet I am not without the hope that, by the blessing of God, this little book may prove helpful to some; for they that have wandered in "the land of darkness and of the shadow of death" will not demand the splendour of the meridian, but be thankful for even a single ray of light.

ALEX. M'NAIR.

KILMARNOCK,

June, 1906.

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CHAPTER I.

Woman's Cardinal Relations to Man in the Light of Holy Scripture.

THE distinction between man and woman may well be called the fundamental fact of human life. To be properly appreciated, it must be viewed in the light of the corresponding distinction which runs through the whole of the animated world. But as nature culminates in man, in him the distinction attains to its highest significance. To what an infinite multitude and variety of experiences has it given occasion! to what virtues and vices! to what hopes and fears! to what joys and sorrows! to what unspeakable blessedness! to what unutterable woe! By generating love, the master-passion of the human heart, it has laid the foundation of marriage, and thereby created the family, with all its sweet felicities, and the race itself, with all its wonderful history. From it, indeed, all human life has sprung—a fact which may well excite our admiration of the ways of God. How simple His methods, yet

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how unsearchable! How humble His means, yet how stupendous the results!

From the second chapter of Genesis it appears that, even in ancient times, the origin of woman was a matter of speculation. How the general distinction between male and female came about would then be a question of less interest than the origin of the distinction between man and woman in particular. And, to speak with precision, the point with which the narrative concerns itself is not so much the origin of the distinction between the two as the origin of their mysterious affinities. From the account of the Creation given in the first of Genesis,¹ one would naturally understand that both came into existence at the same moment; but, according to the second account,² they were not created simultaneously, nor was the woman produced independently of the man. Not many will now care to maintain that the special manner in which Eve is reported to have been formed is the very way in which she made her appearance in the world. The story is no more than a poetical attempt of the Hebrew mind to account for the wondrous mutual attraction of man and woman; but, while marked by a charming, child-like simplicity, it is also, to such as know

¹ Genesis i, 26-27. ² Genesis ii, 21-22.

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how to read it, the embodiment of a profound spiritual truth. On the assumption that they were originally quite distinct and independent, it were more difficult to understand the irresistible fascination which man and woman exercise over one another than on the hypothesis that they at one time constituted an organic unity, and so can never be satisfied until they are one again.

I.

I. In speaking of woman's part and place, it is well to begin by emphasising the fact that she is essentially one with man, "bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh."¹ What they have in common far outweighs what is peculiar to each. Any differences that exist between them, though entering deeply into their constitution, psychologically as well as physiologically, do not obliterate their essential unity, but rather act as a foil to set it off. If we start from their differences, there is some danger of an injustice being done to the woman especially; but when we have fully recognised that they are one in essence, we shall be in a better position to treat fairly of their mutual relations as conditioned by what distinguishes the one from the other.

¹ Genesis ii, 23.

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Both, according to the first of Genesis, were made in the image of God. The New Testament insists even more strongly than the Old on their essential equality. In Christ Jesus, as "there can be neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free," so there can be "neither male nor female."¹ It is not on the higher, but on the lower, levels of life that the distinction obtains. For this world it avails, but not for that which is to come, where man and woman shall be as angels, "that neither marry nor are given in marriage";² although, even in the future state, the difference between man and woman, affecting, as it does, not the body merely but the soul itself, cannot wholly disappear, but must still have some scope for its manifestation, and some beneficent function to perform. If in Christ, and therefore in the Kingdom of Heaven, there is "neither male nor female," in the obvious sense at least, the point of view from which the distinction disappears cannot be unimportant; nor can it be only a small part either of a man's or of a woman's life that is unaffected by the distinction. On the contrary, what is most characteristic and enduring in humanity must be equally within the reach of man and woman, of married and unmarried. While the

¹ Galatians iii, 28.

² Matthew xxii, 30.

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distinction of sex cannot be ignored so long as it lasts, the very fact that it does not endure for ever suggests that even now it ought to play a subordinate part, notwithstanding all the mighty consequences dependent upon it. This it is the more necessary to insist upon inasmuch as, in multitudes of instances, and with disastrous moral results, both men and women accord it an exaggerated prominence. That the longing for love is a deep-seated natural desire, that to receive it is the crowning joy of our earthly life, and that to lose it after it has once been enjoyed is the greatest grief the heart of man can know, what normally constituted human being would deny? But just because the love which obtains between man and woman fills a very large place in their thoughts, so large indeed that it is ever apt to exceed its proper bounds, it is the more necessary to testify that the part of their life which is based on the distinction of sex should be strictly subordinated to that which is independent of it. While formed the one for the other, they cannot be to each other what they ought to be unless they acknowledge the deeper fact that, having been made in the image of God, they are both meant for Him as the end of their being, and must find in Him their supreme satisfaction.

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The man needs the woman to make him complete, and the woman needs the man quite as much as he needs her, to fill up a lack in her life; but the deepest need of both is their need of "Him whom to love is to obey." Their mutual love is but a species of idolatry, indeed, if it be not sanctified by a higher and holier affection.

In "The Lay of the Brown Rosary," Mrs. Browning tells how Onora was unwilling to die because there was one on earth to whom her heart was given. In a dream of the night she heard the angels say that God was willing to take her to Himself, but that the day of her death might be deferred if she had no wish to go to Him; for if she had no need of God, He had none of her. Accordingly, to gain the respite which she desired in order to the consummation of her human love, she took upon herself the fearful vow—

"I would not thank God in my weal, nor seek
God in my woe."

Her life was spared, and the fondly expected wedding-day came round; but when she stood before the altar, all too faithful to her vow, she refrained from thanking God, who had granted her the desire of her heart; and when His name was mentioned in the marriage service, she heard it as if she heard it

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not. But scarcely, the rite ended, had the bridegroom kissed the bride, and said, "Mine own wife," when he "fell stark at her feet." Then, in the wild paroxysm of a grief which knew no bounds, unable to carry out the second part of her vow, as she had carried out the first, she was forced to exclaim,

"Now, O God, take pity—take pity on me !
God, hear my beseeching !"

And thus, overcome by her experience, she at last confessed that, dear as human love is, it should ever be subordinated to the love of God.

2. The fact that the spiritual nature common to man and woman makes fellowship with the Eternal more essential to both than even the love which they bear to one another, has, as already hinted, an important bearing on woman's social position. Here, if anywhere, her equality with man demands recognition. Whether she is his equal or not is only then a question worthy of serious consideration when the comparison between the two has respect not to their accidental differences, but to their essential characteristics. Even the admission that woman is generally inferior in physical strength and intellectual power would not settle it ; for there are other respects in which they may be compared, and that form a juster basis of comparison. As a moral being, woman

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is certainly entitled to claim equality, and an essential equality, with man. It is her dignity, as well as his, to have been made in the image of God. The recognition of man's moral nature is a necessary step toward the full recognition of his social rights ; and so is it with woman. The gradual perception and acknowledgment of what is implied in the personality which is common to both, and which, more than anything else, makes them co-ordinate, has, in the course of ages, done much for man, and even more for woman, who, as the "weaker vessel," is always the greater sufferer when the moral aspects of life are in any way dishonoured. By the abolition of slavery and polygamy—those two great evils of the ancient world—a double advantage has been conferred upon her. As directly accountable to God, she can no more be the slave of man than one man can be the slave of another ; and if she enter into marriage, it can only be by her own consent, freely given, and on equal terms. One wife among many she cannot stoop to be. As the equal of man on moral grounds, she is entitled to receive an undivided love in return for the whole heart which she surrenders. Moreover, in the estate of matrimony scope and opportunity must be secured to her for the fulfilment of her primary obligations, which are not toward her husband,

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but toward her God. In other words, liberty of conscience is a right which must be conceded to woman as well as to man.

II.

The equal of man, woman is also his counterpart and complement.

“ For contemplation he, and valour formed ;
For softness she, and sweet attractive grace.”

I. The two are not so alike that the one is a mere duplicate of the other, nor so unlike that the one is beyond the range of the other's sympathies ; but at once so similar, and so dissimilar, that they answer to one another as man answers not to man, nor woman to woman, their very difference intensifying the charm of their intercourse, and enabling them all the better to supply one another's deficiencies ; so that, amid all the variety of human affections, their love for one another is of a power and compass quite unique—is love, indeed, *par excellence*. Man is one segment of humanity, woman the other ; both are needed to complete the circle. Their union is as a reunion—a conjunction, not as of strangers that had never known each other before, but as of old friends, who discover that they have an inexhaustible stock of common experiences and reminiscences.

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In their isolated condition they may not exactly know what they severally require, though conscious of a certain incompleteness, and even restlessness perhaps ; but, when love springs up between them, they at once recognise in each other the object of their quest, and the heart is satisfied.

In his own characteristic fashion Aristophanes¹ expounds the idea that love is the union of two souls originally one. Primeval men were man and woman in one ; but, for a purpose of his own, Zeus cut them in two ; and after the division "the two parts, each desiring the other half, came together and threw their arms about one another, eager to grow into one." Aristophanes himself is perfectly conscious of the ludicrous character of the myth, as he reports it ; yet, ridiculous as it is, it bears an undeniable resemblance to the Hebrew story of the creation of Eve, which has been so long received with a grave countenance, as if it were prosaic fact, and had nothing at all in common with Aristophanic comedy. The chief difference between the myths appears in the motives attributed to Jahveh and Zeus respectively. Zeus, actuated by fear and jealousy, feelings unworthy of a god, and especially of the "father of gods and men," means to confer no favour,

¹ Jowett's "Plato," vol. 1, pp. 505-509.

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but the opposite, on men, by cleaving them in two, whereas Jahveh, taking pity on Adam, who had yet found no "help meet for him," provides him with a thoroughly congenial companion taken from his own side—a difference significant of the chasm between the ethnic and the Hebraic conception of God. The fancy, which becomes a farce in the hands of Aristophanes, has been taken up by Schiller, and treated by him in his own romantic style.

"Weep," says the lover to his love—

"Weep for the godlike life we lost afar—
Weep!—thou and I its scattered fragments are ;
And still the unconquer'd yearning we retain—
Sigh to restore the rapture and the reign,
And grow divine again.

"Therefore my soul doth from its lord depart,
Because, belov'd, its native home thou art ;
Because the twins recall the links they bore,
And soul with soul, in the sweet kiss of love,
Meets and unites once more.

"Thou too—ah, there thy gaze upon me dwells,
And thy young blush the tender answer tells ;
Each glowing soul still feels the kindred ties,
Each—as an exile to his homeward skies—
Each to the other flies."

How small the difference is between the Greek conception and the Hebrew, as the latter is interpreted by Milton, is evident from the words in which Adam addresses Eve—

"Part of my soul, I seek thee, and thee claim,
My other half."

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This marvellous affinity of man and woman the result of certain deep-seated contrast, and correspondences, may well afford room for scientific investigation, as it has from early times given occasion for poetic conjectures; but whether biology will ever be able to solve the problem may well be doubted. Fortunately, science is not at all required to create the sentiment which it is unable to explain. Nature takes the matter into her own hands, and leads us by a way that we know not.

2. The natural differences which exist between man and woman it is to the advantage of neither to deface, belittle, or ignore. Let the woman be true to her own nature, and the man to his, and both will thereby be more perfect after their own kind, and better able also to supplement one another's qualities. The peculiarities of both must receive their full recognition, since it is these that do most to endear the one to the other, and also to render the one helpful and indispensable to the other. To make the woman as the man, or the man as the woman, would rob their fellowship of its principal charm, and so weaken the mystic bond that unites them. Let it be laid down as an axiom, that the more womanly the woman is, the more

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attractive will she prove. A greater mistake she could not commit than to imagine that she will commend herself to man by aping his ways. If she will make herself as a man, she may expect to be treated as such. What men seek in the woman is not the man, of whom they have quite enough in their own composition, but the woman. The law enforced in the New Testament, that "every one who has received a gift should minister the same," would require the man to aid the woman, and the woman the man, not by an attempted approximation on the part of either to the other, but by the cultivation of what is peculiar to each. Their respective functions they can never properly fulfil in the dual life if they do not first aim at the perfection which is possible to them as separate individuals, and so endeavour to make their several contributions to the common stock as large and rich as possible.

When woman is regarded simply as the slave of man, her education is sure to be neglected; but, when she comes to take her proper place by his side, her claim to education is frankly acknowledged. Indeed, man himself must suffer if she be denied the training that would enable her to enter intelligently and sympathetically into his

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nobler interests. We do not fear that education will efface the manhood of the man, and as little need we dread that it will obliterate the womanhood of the woman. If two slabs of timber, the one of oak and the other of walnut, be entrusted to the polisher, will the distinction between them disappear under his hands? Will not the difference in the grain only then become fully apparent? In like manner, education does not make a woman less womanly, nor a man less manly; it rather enhances their characteristic qualities; and, by developing each, it makes the union of the two a greater blessing to both. For marriage means less or more according to the gifts and attainments which the contracting parties bring into it. And, therefore, the first impulse of love is not to be blindly followed, since it may have respect to some characteristic that is merely external and accidental, and capable of furnishing but a slender and precarious bond of communion. The love that is worthy of a consummation in marriage must be capable of enduring the tear and wear of daily life; and to be so it must be more than a merely natural movement of the heart: it must rise into the region of ethical and intellectual sympathy, and in its object, as a many-sided whole, find

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satisfaction and delight. Anything that falls short of this, while it may serve a fleeting purpose, fails to supply a basis sufficiently broad for the intimate and life-long relationship of matrimony.

III.

According to the Scriptures, not of the Old Testament merely, but of the New also, woman, the equal and the complement of man, is also in a sense his subordinate. If her subjection were affirmed apart from any recognition of her essential equality, there could be nothing for her but servitude ; but when her equality is acknowledged in the moral and spiritual, which is the supreme domain of life, her rights are sufficiently guarded, even though her subordination is also maintained. In treating this part of the subject, reference must be made to the teaching of St. Paul, who, of all the writers of the New Testament, has most to say in regard to it. The headship of the husband he affirms in a manner not to be misunderstood. In the hands of a selfish person such a doctrine might easily be abused ; but, as expounded by the chief apostle of Christianity, the wife has but small reason, if any, to resent it. For, according to his teaching, it behoves the husband to vindicate his headship, not by the mere exer-

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cise of authority, or the mere parade of power, but by services continually rendered to the wife. This is implied in the figure itself; for the head serves the body, and serves it even more than the body the head. Such is the sympathy between the two that even self-interest forbids the one to harass the other. "No one ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it."¹ And his idea of the authority of the husband is illustrated still further by the relation which Christ sustains to the Church as its head. He is no doubt entitled to rule, and does rule, over it; but His headship is based on the self-sacrificing love which finds its most adequate symbol in His cross, and His aim is the highest good of the Church, even its salvation and sanctification. If, then, the husband be to the wife as Christ is to the Church, he will not exercise his authority in an arbitrary or despotic spirit for his own glorification, or for his own selfish advantage in any way, but in love, for her good; nor will he impose his will upon her so as to suppress her individuality, but aim rather at her development, believing it to be quite as much to his advantage as to hers that she should have full scope for the cultivation of her faculties and the development of her distinctive gifts.

¹ Ephesians v, 29.

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It would appear that, in the counsels which he addresses to husband and wife respectively, the apostle emphasises the part which each was then most tempted to neglect. In the ancient world the authority of the husband was all too obtrusive. What was needed on his part was a deeper sentiment of affection; for, as love advances, mere authority in a legal form retires. As for the wife again, who could scarcely fail to be somewhat restive under an authority not sufficiently tempered by love, her temptation would be the very one against which she is so frequently and solemnly warned—insubordination. By exhorting the husband to love his wife, to love her tenderly as he loved himself, and even as Christ loved the Church, the apostle was really endeavouring, in the most effectual way, to procure for the wife a mitigation of the yoke which she had hitherto borne. Still, he gives her no encouragement to assert herself in opposition to the will of her husband; on the contrary, he requires her to be subject to him "*in everything*," as the Church is to Christ.¹

Both the husband's part and the wife's are presented by the apostle in an ideal light, and therefore it would be unfair to parade the one as he puts it, and not present the

¹ Ephesians v, 24.

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other also in the same way. If the husband loves the wife as he is directed to do, it should not be hard for her to perform her part toward him as required. Both are assumed to be subject to Christ, and therefore the husband is supposed to require nothing of the wife that is inconsistent with her duty to her heavenly Lord, while she is understood to be under no obligation to render him an obedience derogatory to her character as a member of the body of Christ. Thus the inclusion of her duty toward her husband in the larger duty which she owes to Christ, although at first it seems to make her subjection absolute, is really the charter of her freedom. Where the mutual love obtains which is the essential condition of a true marriage, and wherever it is sanctified, moreover, by a common allegiance to Christ, there will be no undue self-assertion on either side. The husband will rule as if he ruled not, and the wife obey freely and spontaneously, with no feeling of subjection. "A life of self-renouncing love" will prove to both "a life of liberty."

IV.

Thus the subordination of the woman is practically repealed by the ethical considerations applied to both members of the conjugal

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relation. It is even open to question whether, in the act of insisting upon it, Paul was really moved by the distinctive spirit of Christianity, or only dominated, unconsciously, by the hereditary Jewish idea regarding the subjection of woman. That the apostle, notwithstanding his liberalism, had a certain bias against woman might be argued from the fact that, while there are two accounts in Genesis of her creation—one which represents her as created simultaneously with man, and in the same way, by a direct divine fiat, and another which represents man as “intended first,” and woman as only “after made occasionally”—he adopts the second by preference, in order to secure a foothold for his position that, whereas man is “the image and glory of God,” she is but “the glory” of man.¹ The same animus shows itself still more decidedly in the singular reason given for not allowing woman to exercise the function of teaching: that “Adam was not beguiled, but the woman, being beguiled, had fallen into transgression.”² It was unmanly enough that the male offender should, on the spur of the moment, when called to account for his disobedience, blame his partner for tempting him; but that, long after the event, one of his

¹ 1 Corinthians xi, 7. ² 1 Timothy ii, 13-14.

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sons, who was also a teacher of religion, should in cold blood affirm that Eve was beguiled, but not Adam, was enough to make even the guilty progenitor of the race rise from his grave to repudiate the compliment paid to himself, and protest against the unmerited dishonour done to his fair accomplice.

In view of his manifest tendency, thus attested, to be less than just to woman, the question regarding her relative position cannot be held to be authoritatively decided by Paul's dictum on the point. Justice to the apostle himself demands that he should not be held perpetually bound by his own deliverances, if they show signs of being influenced by ideas peculiar to his age or race. The emancipation of woman was not complete in the first age of the Church: it had then only begun, indeed. In our own day it has made considerable progress in various directions with no bad results, but rather with advantage to society; and it is evidently destined to go further still, not at variance, but in accordance with the great principle enunciated by Paul himself, that "in Christ Jesus there can be neither male nor female."

CHAPTER II.

The Charm of Woman's Character.

TO man at least, woman is the fairest work of God. It may be that to her he is, nevertheless, pretty much what she is to him. Were it otherwise, the world could scarcely proceed as it does. Which of the two is the greater or the worthier is not a very reasonable question, though one which has been often raised. To do either justice, they must needs be judged by a somewhat different standard. For, being different by nature, they have their respective excellences, and also their respective parts to perform. To man as a lover, the question is one that is scarcely possible. For, whatever egotism he may exhibit in other relations, the object of his love, being also the object of his devotion, naturally appears to him the more admirable. One accordingly feels inclined to question the good taste with which Milton makes Adam criticise his newly-acquired bride, as

"in outward show
Elaborate, of inward less exact";

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and even go on to say, with a self-conceit which the circumstances rendered the more reprehensible—

“Well I understand in the prime end
Of nature her th’ inferior, in the mind
And inward faculties, which most excel,
In outward also her resembling less
His image Who made both, and less expressing
The character of that dominion giv’n
O’er other natures.”

Although the woman may, by her attitude toward man, seem to reverse his judgment, and declare that he, not she, is the one to be loved and adored, he will still continue to hold his own opinion regarding the comparative merits and attractions of manhood and womanhood. Wherever true love is, the one will to the other appear the greater and the better. Certainly men do not entertain for themselves, or for any of their brethren, that peculiar worshipful regard which they accord to woman. Her attributes, arrayed against their own, seem as delicate tissues woven on celestial looms, compared with an earthly texture of hoddin-gray. And, however worthy of honour a woman be in the eyes of her lover while she lives, she by her translation becomes, in accordance with a general law which in some measure applies to all our dead, still more holy and venerable in his

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estimation. No bridegroom fresh from the nuptial altar is agitated with such a tumult of emotion as is the husband just bereaved. The joy of the newly-effected union is even surpassed by the pang felt in the moment of separation. Happily, there are not so many haunted by a vanished love as there are that rejoice in a love still possessed. But no one can ever fully know how much a woman is to a man who has not had the one experience as well as the other.

1. It is one of woman's primary characteristics, and one that accounts in large measure for the peculiar sovereignty which she exercises over the heart, that her chief interests are always of a personal nature; that her offices are for the most part such as bring her into direct contact with persons; that her proper sphere is the home and the social circle, where personal relations are all in all; and love, least subject to restraint, has the largest scope and the most unfettered play. Man goes forth morning by morning to do his work in the world, and all day long may be dealing with things, as when ploughing the glebe, hewing the granite, or hammering the iron. If, in the course of business, he has to do with persons, his relations are governed by commercial or other legal considerations,

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which afford little or no occasion for the play of his affections. If devoted to literary or scientific pursuits, he spends his days in a cloistered solitude, tracking truth through many a labyrinth with a patient, impersonal devotion, which makes him a hermit even in the midst of society. But with woman it is otherwise. Persons are her daily and hourly concern. With things she too has to do, no doubt, but chiefly with things that bear directly on the interests of persons, and of the persons dear to her. If it be her fortune to occupy a higher position in the social scale, she may be relieved of certain household operations which have to be discharged by the majority of women, but she has opportunity none the less for ministering, in many ways, to those who are the objects of her affection; and lives, quite as much as her humbler sisters do, in a domain where the interests of her own are paramount.

It is in the relations of wife and mother, which are the most intensely personal of all, that woman's life culminates, and her nature receives its most adequate expression. The manifold duties pertaining to these relations cannot be discharged, like those of the artizan, the merchant, or the student, by merely physical or intellectual labour: they furnish

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a constant occasion for the exercise of love, such as the ordinary duties of the man do not supply. The affection that would embarrass him in his vocation is indispensable to her in hers. But in order that she may be able to discharge the duties devolving upon her as wife and mother, it is evident that, even as maid, she must possess the gracious susceptibilities which, in these relations, break forth into flower and fruit. An abnormal specimen of her sex any woman must ever be whose affections are but ill developed. Neither strength of intellect nor educational accomplishments can compensate for such a deficiency.

2. In keeping with the fact that she moves in a circle of intensely personal relations, woman is by nature peculiarly rich in sympathy. She lives in the life of others, and identifies herself with them so perfectly that everything affecting them for good or evil affects her instantly in like manner. In most cases sympathy lags, and by a long way, behind the experience which calls it forth, but in her case it is so lively that not infrequently it even exceeds the experience out of which it grows. Have you not observed how her soul is elated by the little triumphs of the one whom she loves? And who does not

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know, to his advantage, how precious is the comfort ministered by her in the hour of misfortune? how deep and simple is her sympathy? and how effective in conveying to the heart the conviction of its reality, not so much by any words it utters as by the living signs with which nature itself freely supplies her, making her whole person wondrously eloquent? What a difference her presence makes in the sick-room, and in every sphere darkened by the shadow of affliction! Wherever she goes, a soothing influence emanates from her mysterious personality.

“Alive, as the wind-harp, how lightly soever,
If woo’d by the zephyr, to music will quiver,
Is woman to hope and to fear;
Ah, tender one! still at the shadow of grieving,
How quiver the chords—how thy bosom is heaving—
How trembles the glance through the tear!”

But it is not merely at exceptional moments that her sympathy proves itself a heaven-sent boon. It is her constant identification of herself with the various members of the family in all their common experiences, and the interest which she never fails to take in anything by which their welfare is affected, that make the home a home indeed for every one of them. The man, however much domesticated, does not stand in such an intimate relation to all the persons and affairs of the

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household as his consort. He is not, like her, the depository of all its confidences, nor does there flow from him into the hearts of all that rill of cheering and refreshing sympathy which, without intermission, wells up from the fountain of her innate generosity. The outside world claims him in a greater measure, and so, as compared with her, he may even be a stranger in his own home.

3. Distinguished by her sympathy, it is just what we should expect, that she should be distinguished by her gentleness also. Roughness, harshness, austerity, which are too common in man, are foreign to her nature. The difference between the one and the other shows itself even in the home, where he appears in his most affable and gracious character. Fathers, by no means unkind, sometimes practise on their children, for their own momentary diversion, a caustic style of address. Even in such circumstances, however, the mothers have been known to display a quite unwonted irritation. Teasing, or anything approaching to it, they will not for a moment tolerate. Gentle at other times, they become formidable in their wrath, and assume quite a tragic front, indeed, toward the thoughtlessness which would inflict on any living creature a needless twitch of pain. Although prepared to receive in silence,

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and with a perfect self-restraint, the ungentle word or gesture directed against themselves, they would protest against all ungentleness toward others, and especially toward the young, who constitute their special care. Sometimes it happens also that the father and the mother differ somewhat in the policy which they respectively favour as regards the training of their children. If the father is inclined to exercise a Spartan discipline—to curtail the time given to recreation, and insist on a closer application to study or business—how common it is for the mother to plead for a relaxation of his sterner rule! It is desirable, doubtless, in the interest of the young themselves, that the parents should pursue a common pedagogic policy; but the more wholesome and effective will probably be the one in which the father's rigour is tempered by the mother's gentleness.

4. That woman is more patient, as she is more gentle, than man will be generally admitted. Nature itself has made peculiar demands on her endurance; and in the course of ages, under the social treatment to which she has been subjected, she has received a protracted training in the virtue, until her patience is no less inveterate than her self-denial. From the close relation which she sustains to the members of the family, all of

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whom are continually appealing to her for help and service in some form or other, her endurance is liable to be sorely taxed ; yet how well it stands the strain ! Her good temper, preserved amid all the little provocations of the day, is really the saving of family life.

5. But we should form a very faulty conception of woman if, while recognising her gentleness and patience, we did not also acknowledge her fortitude. It is common to speak of her as "the weaker vessel," but the propriety of the epithet is not beyond dispute. Woman at her best is not inferior to man in courage, and in that respect vastly superior to multitudes of the so-called "lords of creation." It may be that, just because she is, by nature, devoted to persons and personal interests, rather than abstractions, she is precluded from entering regions of thought into which the less encumbered and more adventurous intellect of man makes its way, and therefore the courage of original thinking may not be her prerogative. But there are other departments in which she shows a valour not inferior to man's, and some in which she has displayed a fortitude which might well put him to the blush. Physical suffering she can endure with a heroism unsurpassed, or even unequalled, by

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the sterner sex ; and of such suffering she has more than her own share. And if you would have proof of her moral prowess, you have but to consider with what a glad heart she repeats her round of duty, exacting though it be, as the cradle is filled time after time ; how as a widow she has, in countless cases, supported not only the sorrow of a supreme bereavement, but also the cares and anxieties of a poverty which, for a long course of years, has had the pressing wants of a whole household to provide for ; how in circumstances still more distressing, when the head of the family was forgetful of his obligations, she has striven to do his part as well as her own, and so save the house from ruin. Who can think of the patient achievements of lonely women, toiling in their grief, and grieving in their toil, fighting a daily battle, uncheered by sympathy, to keep body and soul together, without sacrificing their honour or their independence, and yet deny to womanhood the attribute of a splendid courage ? God is sometimes pleased to impose even upon his frail daughters a very heavy burden, and how nobly, as a rule, have they borne it !

6. The charity which "thinketh no evil," but "believeth all things and hopeth all things," is likewise a striking characteristic of

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the true woman. Even when her children are not very bright, or not very good, she never ceases to hope that they may yet turn out well. How often does she idolise an unworthy creature by investing him with her own noble attributes! How pathetic her inextinguishable faith in latent capabilities which still refuse to make themselves apparent! In the parable of the prodigal son great honour has been done to a father's forgiving love; but the mother, even more than the father, clings to the erring child, and, long after every other has despaired of him, and consigned him to his fate, still hopes and prays for his salvation.

7. But woman is also distinguished by her unique faith in God. A woman devoid of love, or sympathy, or gentleness, or patience, or courage, or of the charity which "thinketh no evil," would certainly lack an important womanly attribute; but one devoid of faith would be no less abnormal. For woman is by nature prone to faith, and to hope also, which is sister to faith. And is there not an eminent fitness in the fact that the mother and nurse of each succeeding generation is a born optimist? What an unspeakable calamity it were that the infant should be suckled at the breast of a pessimistic parent!

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How could such a mother have the courage to face either her own future or that of her child? Logically at least, pessimism and parentage exclude each other. Both as wife and mother woman has, even as distinguished from man, large demands made upon her faith, and these she meets by her ample trust in Providence. When persons are ever more to her than things, and love is more than self, a worldling she cannot be any more than a pessimist.

8. But we should fail to do her character justice if we did not take account of

“those graceful acts,
Those thousand decencies that daily flow
From all her words and actions, mix'd with love
And sweet compliance,”

by which Adam confessed himself chiefly captivated, and of the moral grace—the source of “those graceful acts”—by which woman is no less distinguished than by the beauty of her form.

Self-denial has frequently shown itself morose and unattractive; but, as exemplified by her in all her life and work, it is of an entirely different character. To many, to most of us indeed, it comes neither naturally nor easily, being an exotic which has to be kept alive by a forced cultivation. But in woman it is not

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uncommon to witness a self-denial which possesses all the charm of a perfect spontaneity ; which is constantly exercised, yet never grows weary ; which springs, not from the mere sense of a duty to be discharged, but from the impulse of a happily constituted and perfectly harmonious nature ; which seeks no reward, and can even dispense with thanks, delighting to do good for its own sake, and preferring to do it, if possible, by stealth. Such devotion always carries with it a grace which immensely enhances the effect of any good it does, and invests the doer with an incomparable charm. In morality, as in other spheres of human activity, there is such a thing as style. And where, in the region of the ethical, shall we find the style which corresponds to the Miltonic in literature, with its captivating power and magical effect, if not in the true woman, who lives for others, and in others, so completely as to be conscious of no sacrifice, although all her life is one continuous act of self-oblation ?

Let the reader verify the foregoing description of womanhood by the best example that he knows, and again it will be as when

“Each heart recalled a different name,
But all sang Annie Laurie.”¹

¹ Quoted by Royce, “Conception of Immortality,” p. 79.

CHAPTER III.

The Psychology of Bereavement.

THE experience of the bereaved furnishes a striking illustration of the extent to which the human mind is liable to be affected by subtle and impalpable influences; by airy visitants in the form of yearnings for the irrecoverable or the unattainable; of memories that wander through the halls and corridors of the past, as through an enchanted palace now in ruins; of regrets that prey upon the soul, and give it no peace, night or day, even in the midst of peaceful circumstances; of ever-recurring pulses and waves of emotion, that, even when they give no outward indication of themselves, as they sometimes do, in the deep, mysterious sigh, or in the sudden tear, mean inexpressibly much to the one conscious of them. All around us there are men and women much more deeply moved by the thought of some one whom they see no more than by all the events occurring in their neighbourhood. Invisible fingers are ever playing on their heart-strings, with a delicate yet commanding touch, so as to make them answer to the

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tones of a plaintive melody. While seeming to be *en rapport* with current affairs, these stricken souls are really dominated by other interests, not at all suspected, perhaps, by those with whom they carry on, to all appearance just as before, the varied forms of social intercourse.

"Light flows our war of mocking words, and yet,
Behold, with tears mine eyes are wet !
I feel a nameless sadness o'er me roll.
Yes, yes, we know that we can jest,
We know, we know that we can smile !
But there's a something in the breast
To which thy light words bring no rest,
And thy gay smiles no anodyne."

Their innermost concerns they carefully conceal

"for fear that, if reveal'd,
They would by other men be met
With blank indifference, or with blame reproved."

Beneath all their seeming bravery and readiness to answer, as formerly, to the multitudinous calls of their environment, their chief interest flows on, silently and persistently, as a deep undercurrent, in the form of an irremediable sorrow.

"From time to time, vague and forlorn,
From the soul's subterranean depth upborne,
As from an infinitely distant land,
Come airs and floating echoes, and convey
A melancholy into all our day."

So much is the mourner under the dominion of these secret influences that there is a

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danger of his retreating into a den all his own. To this temptation not a few succumb who formerly showed a more than ordinary degree of virility.

“I have trod the upward and the downward slope ;
I have endured and done in days before ;
I have longed for all, and bid farewell to hope ;
And I have lived and loved, and closed the door.”

But, while bereavement may tempt one to look on his own life as already ended, and on himself as already dead, may it not have another and a more wholesome effect? May it not give him a fuller comprehension of the meaning of life? By supplying a deeper earnestness and an intenser spirituality, may it not arm him with a new power for the conflict, and make him a new power for good?

“Death closes all : but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done.”

How bereavement works let me in the sequel endeavour to indicate.

1. In the first place, the ever-recurring thought of the deceased associates itself, more or less persistently, with the moment of his dissolution, and with the painful experiences which preceded it ; and, after whatever interval of time, the memory of these last sufferings still touches the chord of compassion in the heart. Of course this element in the experi-

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ence of the bereaved is not invariable, so far as its relative importance is concerned. For, while there is in some cases a protracted conflict with disease, in others death is instantaneous, or only preceded by suffering of short duration, so that the mourner is able to say—

“Thy day without a cloud hath passed,
And thou wert lovely to the last—
Extinguished not decayed.”

In some cases, again, death occurs at an advanced age, and in a perfectly normal manner, which affords the least possible occasion for compassion, while in others it is brought about prematurely, and perhaps by the operation of causes known to have been preventible, and therefore in circumstances calculated to excite a keen regret. Though a thing of the past, the suffering of the deceased can never occur to the mourner without eliciting a fresh feeling of sympathy, akin to what it produced at first. Distance may, indeed, to some extent modify the feeling; but death-bed scenes have a wonderful way of imprinting themselves on the memory.

2. Moreover, the compassion stirred by the sickness and death of one dear to you extends itself to a wider circle, until it touches the very circumference of the human race.

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Your experience invests with a new significance the familiar fact of death. Now, indeed, for the first time, you begin to know what it means. Henceforward you look with other eyes on all your fellow-mortals. You say to yourself as often as you see a human being anywhere: "Alas! some day he too must die." You are constantly moved to think how much worth and beauty lies buried beneath the sod, and how all the lovely forms in which the human spirit now finds a home for itself must yet, and within a few years, confirm the saying: "All flesh is as grass, and all the goodness thereof as the flower of the field." With a new interest you think of the many that have been bereaved, and the many that, in the coming generations, will be sorrowing as you now are. These are sombre thoughts to have, and they cannot but alter the whole complexion of life, if permitted to sit close to the soul; but in so far as they conduce to a deeper sympathy and a fuller realisation of the pathetic conditions under which our human life is actually spent, they do not impoverish, but rather enrich it.

"The sharpest smart
Which human patience may endure,
Pays light for that which leaves the heart
More generous, dignified, and pure."

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3. Bereavement is also accompanied by a deep sense of personal loss. This, indeed, is its most characteristic element. They that have passed through the experience know now, as they never did before, how intimately their life was identified with the one that is gone beyond recall. The loss of love destroys in us, as nothing else can, the sense of self-sufficiency. We ourselves are still here; but what are we, now that the other is gone? what but a part of an organic whole? The world has been deprived of its charm, and we have even lost a great part of the value which we had for ourselves. That it is possible for egotism to mingle even with our mourning is not to be denied. Instead of bearing one's personal loss quietly and manfully, one may call attention to it in ostentatious fashion, exclaiming,

"Is there any sorrow like unto my sorrow?"

or even

"make parade of pain,
That with his piping he may gain
The praise that comes of constancy."

But in love's grief there is really no more egotism than in love itself, which, by its very nature, takes a personal interest in its object, and therefore cannot but have a sense of personal loss whenever its object is withdrawn.

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One prominent element in the grief of the bereaved, which is not merely self-regarding, is the regret which only the consolations of religion can appease—that one dear to him should be made the sport and the prey of cosmic forces. He mourns for himself, indeed, but not for himself alone. His own case only brings home to him the pathos of human life as a whole. He that has never known bereavement cannot yet know, or even imagine, what a difference it makes. If he knew he would understand how nothing is ever the same afterwards ; how the one loved and lost is longed for, and missed at every turn. Between those who have never known bereavement and those who have there lies a great gulf ; it were not too much to say they live in different worlds. Both may have a sense of love's priceless value, but they that have lost as well as loved have made quite a new discovery of its imperial place and function.

What it is to suffer from adverse worldly circumstances everybody can comprehend. Such trouble explains itself, and is intelligible even to one who has had no actual experience of it. But the sorrow that is due, not to poverty, nor to sickness, nor to any other form of physical hardship, but simply to the permanent absence of one who used to be

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continually with us, is not so easily divined, and does not so readily command the sympathy of the utilitarian multitude.

4. In any experience which consists mainly in a sense of loss, memory of necessity plays an important part. Of the deceased in their present condition we cannot think with any definiteness. For in what state they exist we know not ; and, therefore, to think of them at all, we are obliged to fall back on our recollections of what they were. In some cases a memory may, in point of vividness, approach very near to the original impression ; but never, I think, the memory of a person. And memory may have its pleasures, which are sometimes sweeter even than the original experience, when they come back enriched with associations which have gathered round them in the interval ; but the sweetest of all are embittered by the reflection that they are memories, and no more. Yet the mourner is ever lured to the past, as by some magnetic attraction. He has no option, indeed, if he would think of the deceased at all. Formerly the one lamented was always coming under his observation spontaneously, amid the kaleidoscopic movements of daily life ; but now he never encounters the familiar form in any of the highways or byways in which he has occasion

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to go, never meets it in any of the places of public concourse, never finds it on any of the scenes it used to frequent, nor even in the home which it did so much to cheer and adorn; and so he has to betake himself to a past which exists only in his own recollection. In the absence of the living, self-manifesting friend, it is with such shadows that he has to beguile and, as far as possible, comfort himself. In this way his mind is now far more actively directed toward his *alter ego* than it ever was before. So long as the latter lived he knew where to find him—perhaps the two were never long apart; but now they would never meet, even as the subject and the object of thought, unless the one that is left turned his mind deliberately, or of necessity, toward the other that is gone.

5. Nor do our thoughts of the departed simply take the form of direct recollections. Nothing shows more clearly the mighty hold which they have upon the heart than the fact that to them, from whatever object be presented to it, the mind will contrive to find a way, directly or indirectly, by a network of ramifications which it is not always easy or possible to trace. Anything known to have stood in any relation to them will serve to suggest them. The places where they dwelt, or which

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they visited, the persons who were their friends or neighbours, or to whom they sustained any known relation whatever, the things they handled, the books they read, the products of their industry, the letters they wrote, the glove or ribbon that had been seen on their person, the scrap of paper folded by their fingers, the newspaper cutting which they preserved, the faded flower hid away in the heart of a book—any of these is sufficient to revive the sense of loss, and send a thrill of pain through the heart. Many a strong man, as well as gentle woman, has been unnerved by the miscellaneous contents of a drawer accidentally unveiled. Material objects that are mere trivialities in themselves will yet, by the law of association, produce on the soul rendered preternaturally sensitive by grief a spiritual impression unsurpassed in power by the most solemn and impressive acts of public devotion. And not merely do persons, places, and things, known to have had some actual relation to the departed, recall them to our minds: any person, place, or thing may, by a *tour de force*, be brought into some association with them which will make the heart vibrate. A place, for example, where they never were, is at least one where they might have been, and been with us! Thus the mind of the mourner

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works incessantly, in season and out of season, linking the lamented with every object of thought in heaven and earth, until it is even able to say—

“Thy voice is in the rolling air ;
I hear thee where the waters run ;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.”

6. Further, from the very moment that they expire the mind begins to busy itself with the dead in the way of idealising them. It makes a great difference to us that they are now completely detached from the bodily form once so familiar to us, and so intimately associated with all our memories of them ; that we can no longer locate them, not knowing what relations they have to space, or whether they have any at all ; that they have ceased to manifest themselves to us by any signs whatever ; and that we can think of them only in the terms of a purely spiritual experience. In many ways their death, which has made an immense difference to us, must have made even a greater to them. But they must at least retain their personal and moral identity if they continue to exist at all. Whatever we do we must take care, therefore, not to strip them of the well-known personal characteristics in which their individuality con-

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sisted, and by which they will be distinguished for ever from all others. Much of what we call idealising does not really improve the person subjected to the process, or even preserve his identity. The character that was really worthy had better be let alone, indeed, lest by our so-called idealising we only tamper with it, and spoil it by changing the natural into the artificial. At all events, before presuming to idealise any character, it behoves us to make sure that our own is at least equal to it. I believe that, through the greater attention which we naturally bestow on the character of our friends after their translation, we come to have a fuller, deeper, and more adequate impression of their virtues; and so, without any breach of historical truth, we come to assign them a higher place in the heaven of our regard. There may be an idealising of the dead, therefore, which is no mere work of the imagination, but simply due to a more perfect realisation of what they actually were. The aureole encircling their brow was always there; but, so long as they rubbed shoulders with us in the throng of life, unconsidered and unobserved.

7. But there is a yet closer bond between us and our departed friends. Whether or not they still acknowledge any obligation toward us, there

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is on our side a continued sense of obligation toward them. Wherein the duty consists is a question of which our ethical systems take no cognisance, nor even our Protestant theologies, although, in both its theology and its practice, the Roman Church does make it a distinct part of piety to remember the dead, in certain ways. But no man of sound heart will ever, on retiring from the burial of his friend, assure himself that he has now discharged his very last duty toward him. If we have loved any one in reality, we shall not be able to dismiss him from our mind in such a summary fashion. Whether we will or not, the thought of him will persistently return, and we shall even feel that it were perfidy to forget him. "Out of sight, out of mind!" Nay; "out of sight," and for that very reason seen in everything. "Out of sight," and therefore associated with every object of sense, as if the whole world were but an immense screen on which to project the image enshrined in our heart.

Time was when we could say—

By day thou art in all I do,
From morn till eventide;
Where'er I go thou goest too—
My shadow by my side.

And now, when thou art no more among the living, we say so still, and with greater truth

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than before. For now thou invadest the watches of the night also, as thou wert not wont to do in those peaceful days when love was young. Whatever be the proper answer to the question,

“See'st thou thy lover lowly laid ?

Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast ?”

thou art to us, and wilt always be, as though thou wert alive, and still conscious of our regard. We must treat thee as tenderly and respectfully as if thou wert still among us ; yea, we feel as if our old affection and former bearing were scarcely worthy of thee now.

Is it a superfine sense of duty that thus bids us be loyal to the friends we see no more ? Is it an excess of fidelity, a morbid fastidiousness, thus to extend the law of moral obligation beyond the living to the dead ? I trow not. We should have reason to be ashamed of ourselves if we disavowed all obligation toward those who, to the very last moment of their life, were devoted to us with all their heart. Friends once, friends for ever—is the maxim which we feel ourselves bound to endorse. Sometimes one is tempted to think that, by ruthlessly sundering hearts united in a mystic fellowship, death is the great enemy of love. But with the separation there may begin only a new phase of the romance : a loyalty unparalleled between the living ; a love that is faithful, not merely

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unto death, but beyond it; a devotion that maintains itself not merely so long as it is reciprocated, but after it has ceased to receive any response; an undying constancy that continues to pour its missives into the unseen, although it has still to ask—

“And is there nought of her—no token—
No pledge from that beloved hand?
To tell how love remains unbroken,
How far soever be the land.”

Such strainings and questionings of the spirit are among the most potent, as they are among the most ethereal, influences of which we have any knowledge. Familiar to the bereaved, they are yet, in this world of death, strangely unfamiliar to the masses. Surely they at least deserve to be stated and recognised as a veritable and characteristic part of our human experience, and also to be considered in any estimate of the claim which the mourner has upon the universe, or upon the God who made it. Can it be that all this exquisite concern, all this diversified trouble of heart and brain, is unworthy of regard, and only a fit subject for raillery or mockery? Is it no more than a “murmur of ants in the gloom”? a sign, not of our strength, but of our weakness? a thing of which we should be ashamed, and which we should resolutely suppress, as being but

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an irrational protest against an inevitable experience? To all the searchings and soundings of the sorrowing soul is there no answer but an outburst of hard, unsympathetic, Mephistophelian laughter: "Ha! ha! what fools ye are, O ye sons of men! And never so befooled as when ye build your hopes on your vaunted love and fidelity!"

CHAPTER IV.

How we Honour the Dead.

THE silent homage tendered to the dead constitutes almost the whole of our duty toward them. In regard to our contemporaries we have an endless variety of obligations, because they and we are continually acting and reacting on one another; but with the dead we have no such intercourse, and therefore our duty in relation to them is comparatively simple. Still, such as it is, it must be discharged, and with no less fidelity than our duty toward the living.

That the dead are consciously affected by what we think or feel is more than we can affirm. But persons may be honoured who are all unconscious of the honour done to them. Every day we honour the living in their absence by the respectful way in which we speak of them, and also in their presence by our unuttered sentiments of esteem. Sometimes, indeed, but not always, the honour paid to the living is expressly designed to let them know how we regard them. Thus the honour

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rendered to the dead, even though they should not be aware of it, does not differ essentially from that which we pay to the living. It is something that we owe to them in respect of what they were, and were known to be, and the obligation is altogether independent of the circumstance whether they do or do not know how we are now affected toward them.

The duty of honouring the dead is one widely recognised ; and it admits of being discharged in a great variety of forms. In fact, it plays a very large part in our life, and, like some other things, a larger than we realise until we pause to reflect upon it. But all the ways in which we honour them may be described as various attempts to counteract the work of death by perpetuating their memory or their activity. Actually to recall them, and reinstate them in their former position among the living, is, alas ! beyond our power, or that of any Orpheus ; but we at least do what we can to confer upon them the semblance of an earthly immortality.

I.

1. The simplest and commonest way of honouring the dead is, of course, to remember them, and so make them, in a manner, live on in us. This perpetually repeated act is so

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associated with the other and more specific modes of doing them honour that it may be said to comprehend them all, and be the soul of all. The hold which the deceased have upon our affections may be estimated, other things being equal, by the place which they continue to take in our recollections. Our regard for anyone, indeed, whether dead or alive, may be measured by the frequency with which our thought spontaneously reverts to him. Certainly, no one whom we deeply love will be for long unremembered, at least in our leisure moments, when the mind, freed from the constraint of circumstances, betakes itself by a secret impulse to its own dominant interests, as unerringly as the needle turns to the pole. One is sometimes startled, indeed, to discover how, after the lapse of many years, the dead are still remembered as if they had gone but yesterday. Even the strong man, when he has occasion to refer to the little child long since snatched away from his home, will show by nature's own unmistakable signs—the trembling voice and the tear in the eye—that he still bears in his heart traces of the wound which he then received.

2. Not content to remember the departed, or to rely on our own power of recalling them, we also take care to associate them with a

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variety of objects which shall suggest them to us, and possibly to others also. In accordance with a venerable custom, we in some way distinguish the place where lies the discarded vestment of the soul, primarily perhaps for the purpose of assisting our own memory, but also to preserve for others an indication of the hallowed spot. A single block of stone untouched by the chisel, or a cairn gathered from the adjacent field, would be the first mark set upon the grave. But in the course of time monuments arose of a more elaborate character, until the sculptured column, the richly-carved sarcophagus, the massive pyramid, and the stately mausoleum carried the architecture of the tomb to its highest point of artistic development.

Is there a churchyard in any parish of the land, however rustic and remote, where illustrations are not to be found in various forms of this desire, common to rich and poor, to mark the place where the ashes of the dead repose? As Jacob did long, long ago, when he set a pillar on Rachel's grave, so do we, and so do our fellowmen throughout the world unto this day. A shrub or a flower may be all that the mourner can afford; but, planted on the sepulchral mound, it may be no less eloquent of love and devotion than the most elaborate

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structure that wealth and art combined can rear to the memory of the dead.

With what a new interest do we regard the place of burial when at last we come to have within its walls a parcel of ground that we can call our own, containing the remains of one that was dear to us! With what an increase of sympathy do we now survey all the emblems of love, even the humblest, that bestrew the graves! And with how much greater kindness does our eye now rest on the forms, draped in black, that stand, one here and another there, with pensive mien, each by its own hallowed spot, gazing not on the turf but on things unseen; or that, on bended knee, with trowel in hand, seek to impart a touch of seemliness, each to the narrow strip that contains its own dear deposit!

The dead we also honour by a desire to keep them before us in some visible representation. The image, faded though it be, which recalls with any degree of fidelity the features that now we see no more, acquires a new and greatly enhanced value in our eyes. A sorrowing love owes a debt of gratitude, readily acknowledged, to the art that enables it to look again on the face that is gone for ever. Not only our private but our national life is greatly enriched by the immor-

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talities which art confers on the persons it portrays. It is surely a satisfaction to know, by the statues that grace the streets or squares or public buildings of the city, or by the paintings that hang on the walls of our public galleries, the similitude of some of our countrymen who have played a memorable part in history.

3. In words also we erect many a monument to the dead; and such memorials are really among the most satisfying of all, for by words we can express our innermost thoughts and feelings with an adequacy and a delicacy of which no other medium admits. They are also among the most enduring, sometimes more "enduring than brass." And what a variety there is in such verbal monuments, ranging from the ephemeral newspaper paragraph, or the homely verses, redeemed from insignificance only by the love that inspired them, or the pulpit reference, or the civic oration, to the elaborate biography, or to such an elegiac masterpiece as Tennyson's "In Memoriam"!

4. Further, there are mourners that, having the means, choose to associate their beloved dead with some public institution by conferring upon it a memorial gift. The stained windows which now, even in covenanting Scotland, beautify many a house of prayer, and invest

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it with hallowed associations, conducive to edification, owe their origin in most cases to a desire to honour the departed. Churches, schools, and hospitals have also been in great numbers erected or endowed, wholly or in part, by a generosity evoked by the desire to rescue a dear name from oblivion, and hand it down in some appropriate connection to future generations. Thus the reverence paid to the dead has, in various ways, redounded to the benefit of the living, and proved itself no barren sentiment.

5. Moreover, we perpetuate the memory of the greater and the worthier by periodic celebrations, such as anniversaries, jubilees, and centenaries. In the Church this species of homage has played a notable part. In the Roman communion, with its saint for every day of the year, the practice has even been carried to a possibly mischievous excess. Nevertheless, as it is good for the private person to think from time to time of his own beloved, and to associate their memory with a suitable day, such as the anniversary of their birth or death, it is beyond question a blessing to the community to be reminded at proper intervals of its more eminent benefactors, and an advantage to the Church also to concentrate its attention, at a suitably

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recurring moment, on some really notable illustration of Christian heroism or devotion. "Remember them which had the rule over you, such as spoke unto you the word of God"—is a recommendation which descends to us, not from mediæval times, but from the first century of the Christian Church.

II.

But the truest and most appropriate way to honour the worthy among the dead is to show a genuine appreciation of their character.

1. And to mourn for them when they yield to the common fate of mortals is the first and most natural of all the ways by which we signify our sense of their worth, and of the treasure that we have lost in them. The love that mourns not the loss of the one it loved never loved in reality. Blame not the mourner, then, unless it was his fault that he ever loved at all. But, with all his grief, he is no fit object of unmixed compassion.

"If fate Love's dear ambition mar,
And load his heart with hopeless pain,
And seem to blot out sun and star,
Love won or lost is countless gain.
His sorrow boasts a secret bliss,
Which sorrow of itself beguiles;
And Love in tears too noble is
For pity save of Love in smiles."

2. Our appreciation of the dead may be

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further shown in a feeling of regret if, on looking back, we have reason to think that, while they were with us, we did not sufficiently prize our privilege. The unkindness or neglect with which they were treated, though it may have caused little or no concern during their lifetime, frequently comes home to the callous or thoughtless when restitution, or apology, is no longer possible. Thus does conscience work in relation to the dead as it sometimes fails to do in relation to the living. The moral is obvious, and has been well expressed by Ferdinand Freiligrath in verses of which I offer the reader the following translation:—

O love as long as thou canst love,
And dearly prize the moments all!
The hour doth come, the hour doth come,
When by the grave thy plaint shall fall!
And see that in thy heart the flame
Of love unceasing burns and glows,
So long as one with love sincere
Itself to thine responsive shows!
And, who to thee his breast unfolds,
Do what thou canst to make him glad;
And brighten for him every hour,
And for him never one make sad!
And bridle well thy facile tongue—
An evil word like arrow flies!
O God! there was no ill intent,
Yet, going home, the other sighs.
O love as long as thou canst love,
And dearly prize the moments all!
The hour doth come, the hour doth come,
When by the grave thy plaint shall fall!

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Then kneel'st thou down upon the tomb
And hid'st thine eyes with tears all blurred—
They see the other nevermore—

Deep in the grass of the churchyard,
And sayst : 'O bend thy gaze on me,
Who here upon thy grave lament !
Forgive that I offended thee ;
O God ! there was no ill intent.'

But he nor sees nor hears thee now,
Nor gives himself to be embraced ;
The mouth which often kissed thee says
No more : 'Long since 'tis all effaced.'

Yes, he forgave thee long before,
Yet many a scalding tear he shed
O'er thee, and o'er thy bitter word ;
But now—he slumbers with the dead.

O love as long as thou canst love,
And dearly prize the moments all !
The hour doth come, the hour doth come,
When by the grave thy plaint shall fall.

3. Further, our appreciation of the dead shows itself in an increased sensitiveness to anything affecting their reputation. Now that they are no longer here to bear testimony on their own behalf, we feel ourselves more than ever the constituted guardians of their good name. Any word spoken to their disparagement would be instantly resented, while any tribute to their worth falls on the wounded spirit with a soothing and comforting power, like rain upon the thirsty ground. We insist that they shall at least have justice done to them :

"Do not scan
Each separate act—pass judgment on the man."

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The old saying, *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*, expresses a sentiment which you will never fully appreciate, perhaps, until you have yourself given a hostage to death.

4. And yet again we show our appreciation of the dead by still, in a manner, taking them into our counsel, and referring doubtful matters to their judgment. How, we may ask, would they act in our circumstances? How would they be affected by what we now propose to do? Would they approve, or would they disapprove? Would they smile, well pleased, or would a cloud pass over their glorified countenance? Such inquiries cannot but have a good effect in the main. Though guardian angels in no other way, the pious dead will yet be an inspiration and a defence to us if only we try to imagine how they would be affected by our behaviour.

5. But of all the many tributes paid to the dead, there is none by which they are more truly honoured than by the imitation of their virtues. In comparison with this the "costly funeral," the drapery and millinery of mourning, "the storied urn or animated bust," or even the memorial institution, is but a poor compliment. Let us not profess to honour the noble dead unless we are prepared to follow in their footsteps, not slavishly indeed, but by the

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recognition of what was most essential in their character, and, above all, by giving ourselves up to the control of that divine spirit which actuated them, and which works in every good man and woman, yet manifests itself in no two persons in exactly the same way. Nor let us forget how easy it is for those who profess to honour the deceased to dishonour them instead, by honouring the wrong thing in them. A great man, however far in advance of his own age, is sure to participate in some of its defects; but when he is once acknowledged as a father, a leader, a founder, or a saint, his vices are, by an indiscriminating reverence, canonized together with his virtues, and it becomes a species of high treason in the community that bears his name to suggest that he did not exactly know everything, and was not free from every species of infirmity. His very weaknesses are sometimes honoured as if they were his strength and his glory. All Protestantism owes an immense debt to Luther, for example; but through the doctrine of consubstantiation, which he bequeathed to his followers, there mingles to this day some evil with the good which the Lutheran Church has inherited from its founder. Calvin, too, played a great part in the Reformation; but Calvinism has imposed

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a bondage of its own on religious thought, from which Scotland has just recently, after a long captivity, made a serious effort to extricate itself.

6. Finally, we honour the dead, not merely by honouring the causes which they laboured to promote, but by loving the persons that were dear to them. Christ tells us that whosoever receiveth a little child in His name receiveth Him, and that any kind act done to any of His brethren is accepted by Him as done to Himself. In like manner, could they speak, the departed, and most certainly such of them as are most worthy of our regard, would say to us: If you would honour me pay some attention to those whom I loved, and not to the dear ones alone who were my special care, but also to those members of the community, the poor and the needy, the weak and the tempted, whose good I had learned to seek.

“Therefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus.”

Such are the ways in which we honour the dead. Gone from our sight, they nevertheless

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live on in our heart, and continue to play a great part in our life. Some of them still rule us "from their urns." Are we alone, then, in the value which we attach to them? Have they no significance but for us? Is there a great antithesis between our way of treating them and the way in which they have been treated by the cosmic forces? Remembered, lamented, longed for, revered, and, perhaps, adored by us, have they yet been by the irresistible Power which holds all things in Its grasp, dishonoured, and "cast as rubbish to the void"? If so, how shall It and we ever be reconciled to each other? How can there be anything but a perpetual grudge in our heart toward It for the slight put on those whom we dearly loved, and love still? Any dishonour done to them were harder to bear than an injury done to ourselves.

CHAPTER V.

The Value of Personality.

THAT personality is the highest form of known being may be confidently affirmed without laying ourselves open to the charge of an empty egotism due to the fact that we ourselves happen to be persons. It is inevitable, perhaps, that a personal being should assign the absolute preëminence to his own class. But that personality takes a higher rank than any other form of being embraced within our knowledge is no blind instinctive judgment, illustrating the self-importance natural to every creature in the special form appropriate to a person. That in the whole universe there exists no higher order of being it might be presumptuous to affirm; but a higher it is at least impossible for us to conceive. Since personality belongs to an entirely different category from things material, and is not to be explained by them, it does not surpass them just as one material thing may surpass another. Differing from them all, not merely in degree, but in

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essence, it cannot be estimated in the same terms with them. No increase in the number, mass, or potency of material things can ever make up the difference between it and them. Weighed against a world it retains the pre-eminence which it has when placed against an atom.

1. Its superiority as compared with material things is seen in the fact that the latter acquire a new importance, if not all the importance that they ever have, by being brought into relation to persons, and made to minister to their ends. What, for example, were the commercial value of the gold or the gems in the mines of South Africa if there were no persons to appreciate them? What worth of any kind do they possess so long as they lie buried out of sight in the bowels of the earth? It is only when they pass into man's possession that they acquire any value. That wealth gives worth to its owner is a common idea; but the converse alone is true: that personality confers on wealth all its utility, and therefore all its value. It is the presence of persons in the world that gives its market price to any article of merchandise.

2. There are many things, too, of little or no value from a commercial point of view,

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that yet, through a present or previous connection with some person or persons, acquire a sentimental value which it is impossible to estimate in money, but which, especially when they minister to some interest in the public mind, secures for them a fancy price even in the market. Every family has its heirlooms, every church its relics, every community its monuments, which are cherished, not for their intrinsic value, but, like the "old arm-chair," for their personal associations. The sword of Wallace, preserved in the national monument on the Abbey Craig, is worth more than its weight of old iron. The hat, now protected under glass in the museum of Abbotsford, but once seen figuring on the great head of the Wizard of the North, has a value beyond the price which it would fetch in the old-clothes market. The cottage at Alloway, in which Burns first saw the light, is not worth much as a building, but a precious national asset nevertheless. The manuscript has a value apart from the yellow paper and the fading impressions which the ink has left upon it: a value conferred by the hand that wrote it, and the mind that guided the hand. Let it be known that it was penned by one of our literary heroes, and forthwith it becomes an object of competition to the whole English-

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speaking world. What gives to such a place as Jerusalem or Athens or Rome the magnetic power which it has? Not the modern buildings, nor yet the old ruins, that meet the eye: it is something unseen that accounts for their wondrous fascination; it is the memory of other days long since gone, and of the history enacted then, that makes them dear to the heart of the civilized world. Every famous site owes its glamour to some personal memory.

3. But personality confers on things external not only a commercial and a sentimental but also an æsthetic and an intellectual value. What would the heavens be, with their innumerable orbs of light, if there were no astronomer to view them through his "optic glass," nor even the eye of an untutored peasant to bestow upon them a casual glance? What, to the denizens of the world, were all the marvellous constructions and co-operations which constitute the system of nature if there were no intelligence to track them out, or to appreciate them as exhibitions of intelligence when brought to light? What were the grandeur of the snow-capped mountains, and the beauty of the fertile vales, if there were no sympathetic mind in which they could awaken a sense of their grandeur and beauty?

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What were the blue sky or the green earth, what the ocean "rolling in its power," or heaving only with the motion of an infant's breast, what the gorgeous colouring of the dawn, or the splendour of the sunset, if there were no human eye to admire the spectacle? Let us suppose the world entirely denuded of its human population; would the physical framework, the old scene of human history, still retain its former value? What conceivable worth could a world have that was wholly material? that neither knew itself nor was known of anyone external to it? With the disappearance of mind the glory would have entirely vanished from the universe. Nothing could be predicated of what would remain, for there would be no mind to predicate anything, even if anything did remain. It is spirit that, by its perceptions and appreciations, turns nature to account, converting a dead into a living reality, and lighting up the darkness of the vast unknown with a light never seen on sea or shore. Until it comes within the cognisance of some intelligent being, and reflects itself in the mirror of his consciousness, the cosmos has no significance, and so is no cosmos in fact; till then it is simply as an oratorio with all its wealth of musical sounds unheard, or as

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a rainbow with all its varied tints unseen. It is only through mind that matter acquires any meaning, or is even known to have any existence.

And if it be mind applied to the outer world that makes it visible, tangible, audible, and intelligible, what is it but mind that mind can discover in all that it perceives and understands? in all the established sequences and coexistent harmonies which constitute the matter of the various sciences? Some correspondence there must be between the subject and the object, or the subject could not apprehend the object, nor the object be apprehended by the subject. "Nothing like knowledge is possible between idiots, or between a sound mind and an idiot. And, similarly, between an irrational creature and an irrational universe there could be no communion; nor could there be any fellowship between a reasonable being and a world without reason."¹ The mind which interprets the universe finds in it a mind answering to itself. All knowledge and experience is a species of intercourse between mind and mind.

In virtue of his hermeneutic function, man is the head of creation—all other forms of being culminating in him. The rest of the

"Immortality and the New Theodicy" (Gordon), p. 118.

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world is to him what the pedestal is to the statue. Till he made his appearance creation was incomplete and unexplained ; but so soon as he came upon the scene the meaning and value of it all began to break forth into legibility ; then, for the first time, the reader was there as well as the legend. Himself an enigma, man is yet the key to the interpretation of all else.

But all this, we may be told, is only an egregious example of our human vanity. On Haeckel's principles, and according to Haeckel's own confession, "man sinks to the level of a placental mammal, which has no more value for the universe at large than the ant, the fly of a summer's day, the microscopic infusorium, or the smallest bacillus."¹ But, in such a case, we might well ask the noble bacillus who propounds so confidently his solution of the "Riddle of the Universe," or, rather, of "The Riddles of the World" (*Die Welträthsel*), what is the value of all his speculations, whether it is worth his while, indeed, to speculate at all. If the battle between such a monist as himself and the dualist be but a battle of bacilli, a neutral bacillus, wiser than either, might very fitly intervene with the remonstrance: "Why, my brothers, make ye such a

¹ "The Riddle of the Universe," p. 87.

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mighty pothor? Know ye not that in a world which is wholly mechanical, one thought is just as necessary, just as legitimate, and therefore just as illusory as another?"

4. The value of personality may also be made to appear by viewing it in relation to God, the one absolute standard of value. If material things acquire importance in various ways from being brought into relation to man, much more do they acquire it from the relations in which they stand to the Supreme Being. The simple fact that all things are of Him, and for Him, confers a divine value on all. But personal beings must be possessed of a preëminent worth, inasmuch as they, being the highest expression of the nature of God, and also presumably His chief concern, must in some way contain more of the divine than things material. Where shall we find a truer standard of value than is supplied by the maxim that beings are precious just in proportion to the measure of the divine which they embody? And, judged by this standard, who will deny that personality is the most precious, because the divinest, thing of all? Possessed of an intelligence that enables him to appreciate in some degree the wisdom displayed in the works of God, of a will by which he can follow in the footsteps of the

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Creator, and, within his appointed bounds, issue his own fiat, and of a moral nature, in virtue of which he is capable of sacrificing himself deliberately for the sake of a divine ideal which has for him all the authority of a divine behest, what is man but God in miniature?

5. And to one who is himself a person, what other being can ever have the value that a person has? It is a universal law that every living thing seeks another of its own kind; and within that general law is contained the particular, that every personal being seeks a personal being as his counterpart. Though we stood, like our first father, amid the blushing beauties of a virgin Paradise, with its majestic rivers, and its trees of every kind laden with beautiful and delicious fruit, but still untenanted by any personal being save ourselves, we should find that there was no helpmeet for us there. Sun, moon, and stars all have their beauty, and all exert an educative influence on the mind, but not in these can our spiritual nature find its daily food. Apart from the influence of a person, a person would scarcely awake to the discovery of his personality, or know himself, indeed, as distinct from nature itself.

“As for the world which was made on

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account of us," it has this advantage that "lo! it abides, but we, on account of whom it was made, depart."¹ On the morning after your bereavement the sun rose undimmed, and flooded with its splendour a world which was now for you disenchanted; the streams wandered on through moor and mead as they had always done; the flowers flaunted their petals in all their wonted glory, nor, though you were full of care, did the birds restrain their blithesome songs. But the wound of bereavement is not to be healed by any balsam that nature can provide, great though its resources be as a medicative power. In the hour of our sorest need its very attempts to comfort us seem ill-timed and unsympathetic.

Das aber kann ich nicht ertragen,
Dass so wie sonst die Sonne lacht;
Dass wie in deinen Lebenstagen,
Die Uhren gehen, die Glocken schlagen,
Einförmig wechseln Tag und Nacht.²

The value of a person we may judge, then, not merely by his place in nature, and by his relation to God, but also by what he is to ourselves; and of the three ways of judging there is none so immediate or decisive

¹ "Apoc. of Baruch," xiv, 19.

² "But that I cannot endure, that the sun shines gaily as it used to do; that, as in the days of thy life, the clocks go, the bells strike, and day and night regularly succeed each other."

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as the last. Yet, you say, there are persons in countless numbers all around us, and what value do we set upon them? Are they so very dear to us after all? Although they live in our immediate neighbourhood, we show no desire to cultivate or make their acquaintance. For weeks or months together we might not see their face, yet we should never miss them, nor make any inquiry concerning them. They might even pass from the land of the living, yet we should never shed a tear, or change the course of our life in the slightest degree. But these persons, who are, or seem to be, nothing to us, are much to others, by whom they are regarded with just such an affection as we bear toward those whom we reckon our dearest treasures, and for whom, as His very best gifts, we thank God most fervently. And so, that we may fully appreciate the value of a particular person, it is necessary that there should be between him and us such a relation as will allow us to discover his secret worth, by giving him the opportunity of revealing his inner self—not the outer and merely conventional man, but the inner and the true, the man in his deepest and most characteristic qualities. But to know anyone thoroughly you must know him in more relations than one; for it takes more

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than one to bring to light the manifoldness of our humanity. And there are some that, being of a more complex nature than others, need a greater variety of relations to do them justice, and exhibit them to full advantage; while there are some that, for lack of the necessary relations, have never been, and never will be, adequately appreciated or revealed, unless in some future world they be supplied with a more favourable environment. In each of the relations which he sustains a person shows a distinct phase of his character. Essentially the same in all, he is yet in each phenomenally different. It is only in the bosom of the special relationships which furnish him with a wholly congenial environment that he unbosoms himself. There he throws off the reserve which characterises him in his intercourse with the common world, and reveals his innermost self; there, in consequence, he is most truly known; and there, if worthy of love, loved the most, and to an extent, perhaps, of which even they that love him are not aware, and never will be until he pass out of their life completely, leaving a blank that nothing can fill, a shadow that no sunshine can dispel.

If bare personality were all that we sought and all that we appreciated in a person, one

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would be to us as good as another ; and if we lost a friend we should have no occasion to mourn, for in the wide world there is no lack of persons, and another would be easily found to take his place. But persons are not so alike that anyone can take the place of any other. Each has his own individuality, in virtue of which he cannot be replaced. Two things may be so identical that the one may be substituted for the other without any sense of loss or even difference, but no two persons are thus interchangeable. To the mourner the one that is gone may even count for more than the many that remain.

“The all of thee that cannot die
Through dark and dread eternity
Returns again to me ;
And more thy buried love endears
Than aught except its living years.”

6. The worth of man is also illustrated by his various achievements. In order to estimate the significance of these it is necessary to take account of the point at which he began. If he emerged from a lower form of being the progress achieved is even more remarkable than on the assumption that he came into the world complete from the first ; it is then a part of the upward tendency of the whole creation. In any case we have to think of

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him as entering on his wonderful career without any knowledge, and without any of the arts of life, in a state of utter poverty, physical, intellectual, and moral, from the very thought of which we now recoil almost in terror. He had to acquire the very language without which it is impossible for him to express his thoughts, or even to have any thoughts to express. He had to form habits of observation and comparison, to cultivate memory and imagination, to exercise reflection, to learn to reason from the particular to the general, and from the general to the particular, and so be able to extend his knowledge beyond the obvious and the elementary. The very names of the sciences which he has constructed form a long catalogue; and the facts included in each are legion. There is nothing in heaven or earth, in man or nature, in the present or the past, which he has not made matter of careful investigation, if it has come under his notice at all. He is still working with fruitful results in fields which he has cultivated from time immemorial, and is also from time to time breaking new ground.

By slow degrees he has asserted his dominion over the physical forces, and yoked them to his service. Think of our factories and engineering shops, where, by innumerable

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devices, nature's assistance is secured for all the varied operations of our industry; of our railway trains, speeding through the land in all directions; of our mighty steamships, which traverse the pathless ocean in defiance of wind and tide; of our electric cars, flitting through our streets and along our highways; of our telegraphs and telephones, which play such a large part in the daily business of the civilised world—and you have not only a striking illustration of the progress man has made, and of the immense improvement which has taken place in his condition since the day when, all unarmed, he first faced the world, but also a remarkable proof of the excellency of his powers and the value of personality.

But his achievements are not confined to those which are of an intellectual character: they are also to be seen in the dominion which he has gained over his passions, in his altruistic enthusiasms, in his yearning for the redemption of the world, as these are exemplified in the most advanced members of the race. His moral achievements are not unworthy to be compared with his intellectual triumphs; indeed, they are the chief evidence of his nobility. It may be a great feat to bridle the forces of nature; it is a greater to subdue the flesh with its affections and lusts.

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But even the attainments and achievements which already stand to his credit are no measure of the capabilities of man. There is no reason to think that the progress which has characterised his course in the past has reached its limit yet. We trust that, till the day of human history close, fresh proof will be continually forthcoming of his ability still to advance.

7. One of the most effective ways of illustrating the worth of personality, as exhibited in man, is to point to the most distinguished members of the race—the men who have been gifted with exceptional powers of intellect, or who have exemplified in the highest degree the virtues of heroism, magnanimity, and self-denial. Apart from any other service which they have rendered, these bright examples of humanity are of unspeakable value as showing what it is in the power of man to be. Everyone added to the roll of the illustrious, inasmuch as he confirms or enhances our estimate of the exalted possibilities of human nature, is an encouragement and inspiration to the whole race.

Even those of us who are most democratic in our sympathies are tempted to do homage to the superior specimens of human virtue or intelligence, and to look down on those who fall

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below the average level of the community. But if even in our day none but the mentally and morally *élite* are worthy of consideration, what shall we think of those previous generations which lived as a whole on a lower level than that which to us now seems alone consistent with the dignity of man? And if we think lightly of the less gifted or the less virtuous in our own community, can we consistently extend our respect to those numerous examples of the human race that in other lands are living to this day in a state of barbarism? We do well to moderate our contempt by remembering what our own forefathers were at one time. If God cared only for those who stand on the peaks of humanity, only for men of genius or of distinguished virtue, how could we understand the fact that the great mass of the human race are individuals of no such eminence—that humanity started from a low level, and that in every age such a large proportion of our fellow-men have never risen above the first steps of the ladder? I must either believe that in no case has our human life a special value for God, or else believe that in every case it has. Beyond question the latter alternative is the one favoured by the teaching and the mission of Christ, who not only had a message of

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hope for the reputed failures of humanity, but made them His special care.

Instead of despising the inferior men because they come short, and, it may be, by a long interval, of what others have attained or achieved, it were wiser and kindlier and certainly more Christian to honour them for the sake of that human nature which they have in common with the greatest and the best. The most godlike of the sons of men are no warrant for despising the "vulgar throng." The former, instead of casting a shadow on the latter, reflect their glory upon them, and suggest what, under happier circumstances, they might have been, or may even yet become. Such, at all events, is the view of Christianity, if we may judge by what Jesus, the Son of Man, is to His brethren. The contrast between Him and them is the greatest conceivable; yet He came not to condemn them, but that through Him they might be saved. His perfect righteousness was not associated with a Pharisaic contempt for "publicans and sinners"; on the contrary, He so identified Himself with the humbler members of the race that, by faith in Him, they are exalted to His level and become partakers of His triumph.

If such be the worth of man, whatever his

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condition or character, what is his destiny as an individual? Is he extinguished in the moment of death as if he had no exceptional value? or does he emerge from the fiery ordeal with his personality unscathed? This is the question which claims our consideration in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

*Immortality in the Light of Nature.**

THE immortality of the soul is not the only question of commanding interest which has been bequeathed from age to age. All problems with regard to the ultimate realities are at once the most difficult and the most enthralling. The utmost that can be achieved by any argument in favour of immortality as a never-ending personal existence is the proof of its probability. But, lest the argument should be on that account disparaged, it should be remembered that a probability may approach within a degree of absolute certainty and that if we refused to confide for practical purposes in any conclusion that did not admit of a mathematical demonstration, the whole business of the world would be brought to a stand-still. When we ponder the awful import of the affirmation, why should we be astonished if anyone writing the sentence, "Man is immortal," show a certain tremulousness of hand?

* Abridged from an article contributed to the
"Evangelical Repository."

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The facts of the physical universe taken by themselves do not furnish much, if anything, to support the hope under consideration. Nature is never for a moment at rest. The physical forces are perpetually passing and repassing into each other; the material elements are constantly entering into new combinations; and organised existences, the fairest and the strongest not excepted, return after a longer or shorter period into their primary inorganic constituents. Although the sum of matter and of energy remains constant, yet all individual things are subject to decay.

To vindicate an exceptional destiny for the soul, it is necessary to vindicate its exceptional nature; and therefore, by acknowledging the unqualified applicability of physical analogies, we should only imperil the hope of immortality. Certainly we have no recollection of existing without a body, or in a body other than this which we now inhabit; and our whole experience goes to show that body and soul, whether inseparable or not, are for the present mysteriously allied. Indeed, so perfect is their correspondence and co-operation that, if we viewed them from without, we should hardly suspect their duality; rather, like the ancients who took the combination of horse and rider for a monstrous centaur, we should be inclined

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to refer the two-fold phenomena of human life to a simple, however curious, unity. With each stage of physical growth there comes a corresponding stage of mental development, till, the meridian of life having been passed, the physical and the mental powers begin to suffer a simultaneous declension. Bodily fatigue produces mental langour ; bodily disease occasions sometimes insanity, sometimes the entire suspension of consciousness, and always affects, more or less, our control of thought and feeling, and likewise our capability of external action. The mass, texture, and convolutions of the brain, the conformation of the cranium, the cast of the countenance, and even the colour of the hair, all stand in a more or less definite relation to quantity or quality of mind. Hence the fear that the cessation of the vital forces may entail the extinction of consciousness.

As against this conclusion it should be observed that the simple association of body and soul within the limits of experience is no proof of a necessary and indissoluble connection. If the soul were indeed related to the body as effect to cause, the destruction of the one would be involved in the death of the other ; but if the soul, though dependent on the body for some of its modes, is yet

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independent of it, so far as its existence is concerned—an hypothesis perfectly compatible with experience—the dissolution of the body will only make a new epoch in the history of the soul.

“Modern physiology,” said Professor Huxley, “is tending to the conception that life is the product of a certain disposition of material molecules, and matter and law have devoured spirit and spontaneity; and the physiology of the future will gradually extend the realm of matter and law until it is coextensive with knowledge, with feeling, and with action.” Descartes, Geulinx, Malebranche, and Leibnitz were, on the contrary, so struck by the irreconcilable diversity of body and mind that they denied the possibility of any real communication between them. What if that physiology which is said to have “devoured spirit and spontaneity” never yet came into contact with the facts of consciousness, and is destined to suffer all the disappointment of a Tantalus as often as it attempts to close its teeth upon them! What if, instead of invading the realm of the spirit, it is doomed to stand forever outside the pale of consciousness, never obtaining even so much as a glimpse through the tiniest chink into the interior! The organs of sense,

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which are the instruments of physiological investigation, whether naked or armed with the most delicate appliances, are utterly unable to detect even the faintest trace of consciousness. But for the conception of consciousness drawn from consciousness itself we might examine, with the utmost precision, all the physiological antecedents, accompaniments, and consequents of consciousness—the only facts of which physiology can take cognisance—without ever having the idea of consciousness suggested to our minds. If physiology cannot so much as find the facts of consciousness, how shall it explain them?

On analysing consciousness we discern three elements that offer an insuperable barrier to the acceptance of the physiological theory of the soul, viz., personal unity, personal identity, and personal liberty, which collectively constitute what may be termed the Psychological Argument for immortality.

I.

1. The unity or, as it is often called, the indivisibility of the soul, presenting as it does an obvious contrast to the numerous organs and innumerable particles of the body, has always played an important part in the controversy. But what are we to understand

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by the expression? "The favourite representation of the soul as a simple substance, indivisible and therefore indestructible, is one," said Dean Mansel, "which, except so far as it is synonymous with continuous existence in time, is either untrue or unmeaning. If interpreted to mean that the consciousness of personality comprehends only a single attribute it is untrue; if intended to state that the soul is not composed of parts coadjacent in space it is unmeaning, except on the principles of materialism." It would certainly be untrue to say that "the consciousness of personality comprehends only a single attribute," and "unmeaning, except on the principles of materialism," to assert that "the soul is not composed of parts coadjacent in space." But there is yet another interpretation, neither "unmeaning" nor "untrue," which does not explain the unity, simplicity, or indivisibility of the soul as synonymous with "continuous existence," and the only conception, as it seems to me, which can be legitimately connected with the expression, viz., that fundamental characteristic of the conscious principle which stands opposed to the multiplicity of its coexistent modes, and which effects a synthesis of the many in one complex state. The distinction

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between the unity of the soul thus understood and personal identity is sufficiently obvious. Personal identity is the continuous existence of the ego, and consequently emerges only with successive conscious states; but personal unity is realised in every moment of consciousness, and forms the basis of personal identity. Each person knows himself as a perfect unit, sharply distinguished from all else, not only from outward things and from his own body, but even from his own manifold thoughts, feelings, and volitions. Of things existing in space unity is predicable only in a factitious sense. What you call an individual may be subdivided into innumerable parts, each of which is for the time being an individual as really as the original whole. All that is required to constitute an individual thing is that it be distinctly perceived; and the individual is greater or smaller as the mind contracts or enlarges its field of vision. The real determining cause, therefore, of individuals as objects of perception is subjective, not objective. And as for the unity of organisation, what is that but a name for a multitude of correlated phenomena? The unity predicated of the body, so far from explaining the unity of consciousness is itself dependent

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on it. But for the unity of the conscious principle no other unity would be perceivable or thinkable; but for it all would be unconnected; the universe, instead of being an orderly compact system, would be nothing but a "rope of sand"—a chaos of unconnected particulars. But if the unity of consciousness is so essentially different from the unity predicable of material things, it is obviously unwarrantable to deduce from the one kind of unity what may be legitimately inferred from the other. Even though material atoms were shown to be indestructible, it would not follow that the indivisibility of the soul involves immortality. Nevertheless, the unity of the ego finds an important place in the argument for immortality, being inexplicable on materialistic grounds.

2. Again, as I may be variously affected at one and the same time, and yet have the unmistakable consciousness of my personal unity, so I may pass through a succession of experiences and yet retain the consciousness of my personal identity. Indeed, as the consciousness of personal unity is necessary to the recognition of coexistent variety, so the consciousness of personal identity is necessary to the recognition of consecutive variety. If I were not substantially the same from

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moment to moment, how could I recognise one thing as prior and another as posterior? Such a thing as a series would be unknown and unknowable; each phenomenon would be isolated from every other—a beginning without an end, an end without a beginning. Hence it is obvious that personal identity is, like personal unity, an indispensable condition of human intelligence, which grows with the lapse of time from less to more.

Now, how does physiology explain diverse mental states? By diverse physical states. And how does it explain the unity and identity of consciousness? By parity of reasoning, it must be by physical unity and identity. But wherein do these attributes reside? How can the body be perpetually one and the same, so as to provide for the simple and unchanging element in consciousness, and yet perpetually changing, so as to provide for the manifold and variable element, which is equally indispensable to consciousness?

3. There is yet another element in self-consciousness which, as going to prove the soul's independence of the body, is available as an argument for immortality. I refer to the voluntary element, which is as conspicuously opposed to the involuntary as are the unity and identity of the ego to the

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multiplicity and diversity of its modes. If the soul were the mere product of organisation, liberty would, of course, be absolutely excluded. Accordingly, if it can be shown that there is an element of freedom in the soul, the physiological hypothesis will have been refuted. Of the consciousness of liberty as an argument for immortality no one has made better use than Plato in the *Phædo*, from Professor Jowett's translation of which I take the following extract. The interlocutors are Socrates and Simmias, and Socrates leads.

"What ruling principle is there of human things other than the soul, and especially the wise soul? Do you know of any?"

"Indeed, I do not."

"And is the soul in agreement with the affections of the body? or is she at variance with them? For example, when the body is hot and thirsty, does not the soul incline us against drinking? and, when the body is hungry, against eating? And this is only one instance out of ten thousand of the opposition of the soul to the things of the body."

"Very true."

"But we have already acknowledged that the soul, being a harmony, can never utter a note at variance with the tensions, and relaxations, and vibrations, and other affections of the strings out of which she is composed; she can only follow, she cannot lead them."

"Yes, we acknowledged that, certainly."

"And yet do we not now discover the soul to be doing the exact opposite—leading the elements of which she is believed to be composed; almost always opposing and coercing them in all sorts of ways throughout life; sometimes more violently, with the pains of

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“medicine and gymnastic; here again more gently;
“threatening and also reprimanding the desires, passions,
“fears, as if talking to a being which is not herself, as
“Homer in the *Odyssee* represents *Odysseus* doing in
“the words—

‘He beat his breast, and thus reproached his heart :
Endure my heart; far worse hast thou endured !’

“Do you think that *Homer* could have written this
“under the idea that the soul is a harmony, capable
“of being led by the affections of the body, and not
“rather of a nature which leads and masters them,
“and herself a far diviner thing than any harmony !”¹

(a) The voluntary element of consciousness is involved in the growth of human knowledge, to which it is as indispensable as either personal unity or personal identity. On the materialistic hypothesis error must be, equally with truth, the creation of physical states. Why, then, should the one be called error and the other truth? The validity of the distinction can be maintained only on the assumption that we possess a power of verifying our judgments, which is distinct from the passive susceptibility of impressions. We can arrest or deflect the stream of consciousness by attention—an exercise of will underlying comparison, generalisation, induction and deduction, all the processes, in short, by which the system of human knowledge is built up. Take away from the mind this power of selecting its own objects, of discriminating

¹ Jowett's "*Plato*," vol. I, pp. 443-444.

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and marshalling phenomena, and you remove the possibility of intelligence; nothing will remain but a flux of obscure and indistinct impressions.

(*b*) Again, the power of self-determination is involved in morality as well as in the direction of the cognitive activities of the mind. If the soul were but the product of organised matter, the distinction between the physical and the moral would disappear; conscience would be an absurdity, inasmuch as alternative choices would be entirely excluded. But against this identification of the moral and the physical, which introduces hopeless confusion into our human life, conscience and the consciousness of liberty are perpetually protesting. Whatever metaphysical theories we may hold, and however inclined we may be by appetite to depart from the course which righteousness prescribes, we cannot but acknowledge that there is an obligation upon us from which we cannot escape. The conflict between the flesh and the spirit, of which everyone has some, and many a painful, experience, exhibits our personality in the boldest relief. All through life we are summoned to assert in the face of temptation our personal nature, and our connection with another world than the

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material. The soul takes its own course, uncoerced by fire or sword, conscious of laws and powers peculiar to itself. And, when it has bravely set at defiance foreign influences that menace its innocence and honour—conquering fear by faith, and passion by principle—so far from confounding itself with the body, which it holds in subjection, and sways at its will, it soars aloft in the consciousness of personality and moral dignity, and confidently expects a destiny proportionate to its exalted nature and character. Even when, on the approach of death, the man is compelled to depart, however anxious he be to remain, to drop the plans which he would fain have carried into execution, and to quit the society into which he has struck the roots of his affection, he knows that his proper self is unsubdued. Even at the last hour, whether calmly accepting the inevitable or rebelling against it, the soul asserts its independence, and resents nothing more passionately than to be identified with “the mortal coil” which it is about to “shuffle off.”

If, as I have endeavoured to show, the soul is in possession of inherent powers that are independent of the physical, and even of the vital forces, why should its survival of the

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body be thought incredible? If it possesses what the life of the body cannot give, it must also possess what its death cannot take away. Let it be admitted that death destroys the organs of sense; does it also destroy the powers which recognise the sense-given phenomena, and which construct out of that *indigesta moles* the stately and symmetrical temple of human knowledge? Let it be admitted that, by the death of the body, we cease to receive the sensible impressions to which we have been accustomed; who knows whether there may not be some other mode of communicating with the external world? And even though matter should be placed entirely beyond cognition by the dissolution of these present organs of ours, is there nothing but matter that can afford an object for cognition? If there were no possible object of knowledge but matter, nothing at all would be known or knowable, since matter is known only by, and as opposed to, mind. Therefore, if matter is known, something else also is. But if matter cannot be known, except in relation to mind, is it not also the case that mind can be known, or can know itself, only in contradistinction to matter? No; the ego can know itself only in contradistinction to some

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non-ego, but the non-ego is not necessarily material.

II.

I. Let us now look at the Moral Argument, to which great importance has been attached by some thinkers, by Kant conspicuously, who regarded the immortality of the soul as "a postulate of the pure practical reason," on the ground that, in this life, it is impossible to attain to a perfect conformity of will to the moral law, and that such perfection can be attained only in the course of an endless progression. The argument has more aspects, indeed, than one. As generally understood, it means a necessity for a future state in which the actions of the present life shall meet with a more adequate retribution, and in which the felicity (*Glückseligkeit*) and the morality (*Sittlichkeit*) which Kant terms the "first" and the "second" elements of "the highest good," shall be perfected together. It dwells on the anomalies so frequently encountered of righteousness oppressed and wickedness triumphant, and asserts that these are only temporary disturbances, which must be rectified in a future world. On this phase of the moral argument I beg to offer the following criticisms:—

If we have no idea of retribution but

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what is furnished by experience, it is clearly incompetent to infer from the present system of retribution, which is declared to be imperfect, the necessity of a future one, more exact in its operation. If experience be our only guide in the matter, what warrant have we for characterising the present administration as imperfect, or for expecting that the retribution of the future will be marked by greater precision? Going by experience alone, we could only expect that "what has been is that which shall be."

Can the alleged necessity be more successfully maintained on *a priori* grounds? Granted that we instinctively connect the idea of evil desert with evil doing; yet as *a priori* judgments are essentially formal, they do not enable us to determine what retribution is suitable to any act, nor to adjudicate on the question whether a future life is necessary in order that justice may be done in each case to the moral character of the present life of the individual. If retribution is necessary, I see a system of retribution already in operation. One may therefore believe in retribution without accepting the doctrine of immortality. In the Old Testament there is no doctrine more emphatically asserted than that of retribution,

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and yet none more obscurely affirmed, or less applied to practical purposes, than that of immortality. In the present state, it is true, wealth and other worldly goods are not distributed according to the character of individuals. There are natural as well as moral conditions of temporal prosperity; and natural advantages of mind, body, and circumstance, sometimes award the worldly superiority to a man of inferior moral character. But is it necessary to the reality of a system of retribution that the natural should be eliminated as a factor of human happiness? and that all should be made to depend on moral conditions, so that men would experience no good or evil but what answered to some good or evil which they had themselves done? If it is, then indeed, retribution has at present no place among us; for the wicked are sometimes distinguished by their advantages, and the righteous by their disadvantages. But such a Draconian system, besides absolutely excluding the operation of divine grace, would starve itself to death by preventing the very possibility of those moral products, or even of those moral agents and agencies, which any system of retribution necessarily presupposes. The bestowal and continuance of natural good is

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the basis of responsibility; man cannot act unless something is first given to him.

As to the alleged anomalies of the present state of existence, it should not be forgotten that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of his possessions"; that the greatest happiness is not alway associated with the greatest worldly prosperity; that if we suffer not a little that we do not deserve, we also enjoy a great deal to which we are not entitled. And in such cases as that of the righteous persecuted, wherein lies the root of the anomaly? Is it not in the sin that persecutes? And can any system of retribution prevent that? In the future life, which is alleged to be necessary for the redress of grievances, is it certain that the lamented anomalies of the present will disappear? On the contrary, is it not certain that, if sin be still committed—and that it will be who can doubt?—the so-called anomalies of the present will be perpetuated?

If death were the end of conscious existence, it is undeniable that the last actions of a man would not have the same extent of consequences as those committed earlier in life, and, if it were necessary that they should be rewarded on the same scale, it would be necessary that his existence should be

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continued beyond the grave. But, to justify this argument, it must be shown that our life here is prolonged from hour to hour, in order that we may reap the consequences of our past actions, which would imply that, though comparatively venial, the sins of our childhood and youth are punished with an altogether exceptional rigour, inasmuch as they may continue to bear fruit through our whole life; and the converse doctrine, which is the more reasonable, that because our life is prolonged the consequences are prolonged, must be shown to be untenable.

And yet one cannot but feel that the martyr who has no opportunity of receiving any benefit here from an act of the sublimest heroism, since he perishes in the very moment when his virtue culminates, has a claim which must be recognised elsewhere. Is the Power which requires us to be faithful even unto death under no obligation to keep faith with us?

2. But whatever doubt may remain as to its necessity for merely retributive purposes, there can be no doubt, I think, that a future life, had we reason to believe in it, would exercise a salutary influence on the present. Under the assurance that death would not rob us of the hard-won fruits of our earthly

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toil, all our nobler powers would work with redoubled energy. Undoubtedly we ought to do what is right, whether there is a future life or not. But may we not affirm that the intellectual and moral nature of man requires the belief, and, if the belief, the fact of immortality, in order to its full and harmonious development? Without forgetting or disparaging the immediate rewards of virtue, we may boldly maintain that nature affords men but scanty encouragement to do the right, or to do their best, if, after toiling for perfection and vigorously denying themselves for the sake of an ideal, they are flung into the yawning abyss of nothingness, to find the end of all their endeavouring there. Against such a fate the heart cannot but protest.

“And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,
Who build him fanes of fruitless prayer;
Who loved, who suffered countless ills,
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or seal'd within the iron hills?”

It is worthy of observation too that the desire of immortality is strongest in the best minds, and also in the best moods of the best minds. The man in whose heart there

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burns no holy flame of aspiration may evince comparative indifference to the question of a future existence, inasmuch as, being dead at heart, he knows not by experience what life is in its noblest form, and cannot so much as conceive it. Only those to whom the Spirit has revealed "the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him," are fully capable of appreciating the boon of immortality. "If the religion of humanity," says Mr. J. S. Mill, in one of his posthumous essays, "were as sedulously cultivated as the supernatural religions are (and there is no difficulty in conceiving that it might be much more so), all who had received the customary amount of moral cultivation would, up to the hour of death, live ideally in the life of those who are to follow them; and though, doubtless, they would often willingly survive, as individuals, for a much longer period than the present duration of life, it appears to me probable that, after a length of time, different in different persons, they would have had enough of existence, and would gladly lie down and take their eternal rest." In this way the "religion of humanity" would culminate in the destruction of humanity! For not until the nature of man has been utterly paralysed, will it admit

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the indifference, or even, to call it by a milder name, the quietism, characteristic of these finished products of the new religion. Any pretended culture that would have the effect anticipated would signalise its own insufficiency. If it has the effect of extinguishing the desire, naturally so strong, of self-continuation, nor of that merely, but of continued fellowship with those whom we have learned to love, what shall we think of the experience through which it must first have conducted its votaries? Most certainly it has never led them up to the Mount of Transfiguration, and given them to witness such sights and sounds as prompted the exclamation: "It is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles." Those who have once quaffed the stream that flows from the throne of God never think that they have had enough. Yea, though he be no saint,

"Who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?"

And, as another of our poets testifies,

"Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human breath
Has ever truly long'd for death.

'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,
Oh life, not death for which we pant;
More life and fuller that I want."

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Accordingly, it is not as a mere instinct of self-preservation that the longing for immortality appears and claims recognition; nor is that the form in which it is most powerful or most authoritative. There were little to charm the soul in the prospect of an eternal monotony; such an existence we should deprecate rather than desire. The hope of a future life commends itself chiefly by the opportunities it affords for endless progression. The desire is of a higher order, therefore, than the instinct which makes the lower creatures cling to life. If they shrink from death, they are moved more by a dread of the pangs which precede it than by a fear of death itself, and of what it involves; but man recoils from death chiefly because of the possible sequel. And so man's desire of immortality springs not from his littleness, but from his greatness. This has to be borne in mind in considering whether there is a probability of a suitable provision for it. There are desires and desires: some that are whimsical and frivolous, and have no right to be satisfied; and others that are more authoritative, of which we can almost say they ought to be fulfilled. This distinction it is unjust to overlook, and argue that, because some desires are not satisfied, therefore

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the desire of immortality will not be. "Many a man," says Mr. Mill, "would like to be a Cræsus or an Augustus Cæsar, but has his wishes gratified only to the moderate extent of a pound a week, or the secretaryship of his trades union. There is, therefore," he adds, "no assurance whatever of a life after death on the ground of natural religion." This conclusion rests on the assumption that the noblest and most disinterested desires have no more authority than those which have their root in the most ridiculous vanity or the most reckless ambition—an assumption which cannot be admitted until morality has first been cast overboard.

III.

The finitude of the soul precludes the possibility of demonstrating by its own nature, whether psychologically or morally considered, the impossibility of its ever ceasing to exist. Even though it were satisfactorily shown that the soul is not the creature of the body, it would be unwarrantable to infer its independence of anything external to itself; otherwise we should have reason to believe in its eternal existence *a parte ante* as well as *a parte post*. Until we know the cause of its existence, we cannot argue with con-

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fidence regarding its destiny. But how shall we know the cause except by the effect? The cause on which the soul depends must be capable of accounting for intelligence and freedom. And what cause but a personal God is capable of producing such an effect? Such certainly is the God whose offspring we are, and with faith in such a God our prospect of immortality brightens considerably. It is vain to infer from any desire of ours, however noble, the likelihood of its realisation, unless the Power on which we depend be responsive to moral considerations. On any other supposition,

“this fond desire,
This longing after immortality,”

can never be reasonably converted into a
“pleasing hope.”

“Thou wilt not leave us in the dust ;
Thou madest man, he knows not why ;
He thinks he was not made to die.
And Thou hast made him ; Thou art just.”

IV.

Let me conclude with a word on what may be called the Conservation-of-energy Argument. Let us suppose that the mind is destroyed in death, that the treasures of knowledge gained by “scorning delights and living laborious days,” the aptitudes formed

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by patient self-culture, the moral power won in a life-long conflict with evil, are all lost for ever. What greater loss can we conceive? Though the whole material world were destroyed, the loss would be nothing in comparison with the loss of the mind, including all its powers and acquisitions; and it would be less than nothing in comparison with the loss involved in the destruction of all the minds that have ever appeared. Moreover, such a loss would be quite unparalleled by anything witnessed in the material universe. There nothing is lost. The quantity of matter and energy is the same to-day as it has ever been. New combinations of matter, new transformations of energy, are perpetually in process, but nothing is absolutely destroyed. Even the dead body refunds its original elements into nature's hands for the elaboration of fresh forms of life and beauty. But the law of the conservation of energy is not satisfied simply by the scrupulously economical manner in which the human corpse is disposed of. What becomes of the intelligence, the sympathy, the character of the man? Through the actions and utterances of his life-time he may exercise a posthumous influence over unmeasured tracts of time and

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space. Thus the energy spent in the body is preserved, even after the body is dissolved. But what of the man himself—from whom that energy emanated? He cannot bequeath to his heirs, or to posterity at large, his intellectual power or his moral character; in one word, his self-consciousness. And the supposition that these forms of energy are utterly lost is forbidden by the analogy of nature. If that which is of less value—matter—is so carefully conserved, can we believe that what is of greater value—mind—is recklessly squandered?

“The waves which lull thy body’s rest,
The dust thy pilgrim footsteps trod,
Unwasted, through each change, attest
The fixed economy of God.

Shall these poor elements outlive
The mind whose kingly will they wrought?
Their gross unconsciousness survive
Thy god-like energy of thought?”

The physicists who declare that mind is but a transformation of physical energy, will have to complete their theory by showing how the potential energy of the habits, dispositions, and aptitudes of a man deceased is to be re-converted into such forces as electricity and magnetism. If the mental and moral energies of the man are not lost, in what form are they perpetuated? Such is their nature that

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they cannot exist at all except as the property of the individual to whom they originally belonged; in other words, unless he continue to exist, and to retain his personal identity.

“That each, who seems a separate whole,
Should move his rounds, and fusing all
The skirts of self again, should fall
Remerging in the general whole,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet
Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside,
And I shall know him when we meet.”

CHAPTER VII.

Shall we know each other hereafter?

WHETHER the conscious life of man ends at death, or is continued beyond, is a question of never-failing interest, but bereavement greatly enhances the bewitching power of the problem. And, if our faith already go so far as to affirm a future life, another and more specific, but closely allied, question (which we may have hitherto honoured with only a passing thought)—whether the departed are capable of recognising each other—likewise appeals to us with a greatly augmented force. Until we know by a personal experience the bitter pang of separation, we cannot adequately conceive the yearning of the lonely heart for its sundered complement, and therefore cannot properly estimate the full significance of the question, being unable to comprehend some of the most important data necessary to its consideration. What is for each, in the moment of bereavement, his own burning question—whether he will ever meet again the one whose loss he deplures—is only part of a larger inquiry in which

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all have a common interest ; and through the special question which appeals to each separately we come to appreciate the force of the general question which concerns humanity at large.

I.

I. That immortality would be a boon of no value unless accompanied by reunion with departed friends, I would not go so far as to say ; but I do not hesitate to assert that, unless it be so accompanied, it will be shorn to a very large extent of any charm which its anticipation has for the majority of human beings. If I mistake not, an individualistic immortality would be to none of us an object of desire. Who would care to live through a whole eternity alone ? A time there may be in the early history of the aspiring individual when, intent on self-culture, he values immortality chiefly for the sake of the continuous intellectual development which it provides the opportunity of securing ; but by and by, with a growing experience of the moral aspects of life, and a more intimate coalescence of affection with other members of society, and especially with the members of his own family, he comes to have a new interest in the question. The heart that has

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tasted the sweetness of love, and also the bitterness of love lost, will strenuously press its claim in any endeavour to realise the conditions required to bring the future world into conformity with the rational demands of the human spirit. Moreover, it is evident from our present experience that, in the world to come, a continued personal development presupposes a continued social intercourse. For, cut off from all fellowship, man could make no progress here, either intellectually or morally; and hereafter he could fare no better in an unbroken solitude. The future, then, offers no hope of spiritual well-being except in connection with a continued social life. Any hope that appeals to us effectively is a hope of life in fellowship.

2. Among the various arguments of unequal value which admit of being employed on behalf of immortality, may we not find one in the very desolation wrought by death, and in the very persistency with which the heart clings to the vanished object of its affection? When you come to lose the one you love, you will find that, with her, you in great measure lose all else besides. Nothing you possess or enjoy will ever be as it was. The house in which you live will no more be the same, when bereft of the genial presence that

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filled it as with sunshine, and made it home, in the full and joyous sense of the word. Nor will the garden be the place it used to be, when her feet no more press upon the sward, and her form is no longer seen moving to and fro among the flowers and shrubs. What will the daily meal be but a fast when she, with her beaming countenance, no longer graces the board? And, disguise their sorrow as they may, what but a quasi-funereal group will be the gathering around the hearth at eventide, or at any of the periodic festivals of the year that bring the scattered members of the family together, when she who was the light of the home, and the loved of all, persistently fails to appear, and is yet persistently remembered, and persistently longed for? Any success you achieve will count for little when she will be no longer by to witness it, and share the satisfaction which it brings. Even the joyous light of summer suns, transfiguring land and sea, will be accompanied by a feeling of sadness as you think that for her, alas! it avails no more. This yearning, let anyone say what he will to the contrary, is, in my opinion, a sacred thing, to be treated with sympathy and reverence, and not to be slighted, still less derided, as a mere mark of weakness.

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"O happy days ! O happy, happy past !
O friend ! I am a lone, benighted ship ;
Before me hangs the vast untravelled gloom :
Behind, a wake of splendour fading fast
Into the hungry gloom from whence it came."

3 But if the departed still live, the yearning cannot be on our side alone ; they must needs long for us, even as we do for them. Forgotten us they cannot have : indifferent they cannot be. The love of which they gave us ample proof assures us that, if they still have a conscious being anywhere, they continue to think of us with unabated love and loyalty. Among the countless inhabitants of that spirit-world into which they have entered, none, methinks, however great or good, can ever be so dear to them as the souls that are mourning for them in their old home. Of our interests and fellowships there will doubtless be in the future life a vast extension ; but that the ties of earth will be dishonoured in heaven, it would dishonour heaven to believe.

" 'In heaven none marry.' Grant the most
Which may by this dark word be meant.
Who shall forbid the eternal boast,
I kiss'd, and kiss'd with her consent ?
If here, to love, past favour is
A present boast, delight and chain,
What lacks of honour, bond and bliss,
Where Now and Then are no more twain ! "

From whatever happiness may be the lot of

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such as have passed "the bourne whence no traveller returns," it must be a sensible deduction to be separated from those whom they loved on earth. Not without us can they be made perfect. Their love is certainly not less now than it was, nor less to us than is ours to them, which has only been deepened by their removal from our sight. Perhaps some one will object that, if they had any strong desire for their old home, or felt, in any degree, that sense of bereavement which we feel, they would not be completely happy ; but, in their own interest, I am even more concerned that they should abide true and loyal to their friends than that they should be happy, if it were necessary to their happiness that they should be so unnatural as not to "cast one longing, lingering look behind." So long as they were here, they never gave the first place to their own comfort or convenience, and would never have thought of purchasing happiness for themselves by a neglect of the offices of love ; nor can they do so now, unless, instead of advancing in moral nobility, they have become strangely degenerate. Andromache, fearing that her beloved Hector might perish by the hand of Achilles, "fierce with vengeance for Patroclus slain," pleads

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with him not to expose himself to the danger of battle :

“No more I hear thy martial footsteps fall—
Thine arms shall hang, dull trophies, on the wall—
Fallen the stem of Troy !
Thou go'st where slow Cocytus wanders,—where
Love sinks in Lethè, and the sunless air
Is dark to light and joy !”

But, in a manner equally worthy of his patriotism and his love, Schiller's hero, transcending the original Hector, the Hector of Homer, replied :

“Longing and thought—yea all I feel and think
May in the silent sloth of Lethè sink,
But my love not !
Hark, the wild swarm is at the walls !—I hear !
Gird on my sword—Belov'd one, dry the tear—
Lethè for love is not.”

II.

I. If the soul continue to exist at all we cannot but think of it as retaining the consciousness of its identity ; but this implies an ability to compare what it was with what it is, and therefore some knowledge of the past combined with a knowledge of the present. Reason forbids us to think of the departed spirit as beginning life again *de novo*, having forfeited all it had ever learned. To what purpose were our present life, with all its manifold and frequently painful discipline, if at least its most important results

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were not conserved amid the ruin of death, that they might descend with us as an everlasting gain into the future? If intelligence remain, the past, which has done so much to develop it, and also to furnish it, cannot be a total blank. If memory disappeared, how could intelligence itself survive? That in the moment of dissolution the soul loses all hold upon the past, and is ushered into the other world as a babe into this, with no memory of a previous existence, does not seem to harmonise with the continuity characteristic of our experience and of God's ways in general, or to conserve, with a becoming frugality, the precious and hard-won fruits of our earthly training.

Moreover, it were inconsistent with the principle that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." If, when we die, our present life goes for nothing, it is thereby dishonoured, and to the last degree, being treated as a thing of no consequence whatever. Whether a man acquitted himself well or ill, whether he led an upright and honourable life, or abandoned himself to sensuality, would not matter in the end if at death the connection were completely severed between what he had been and what he was yet to be. What incentive would there be to the

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pursuit of knowledge if all that we had laboriously learned by years of study were erased from the memory, and we began the future life just as we began this, the mind a blank? What room for remorse if, having abandoned himself to the lusts of the flesh, a man awoke in the other world with a soul pure and serene as an infant's, purged from all the evil memories which had, to the last moment of his life, haunted and tormented him? And what profit should we have from a life of strenuous self-denying virtue if the proceeds of our warfare with temptation were wholly lost, and we could not so much as identify what would then be our present with our former self? A future life has been in every age earnestly demanded, and by none more earnestly than by the noblest spirits, as being in many ways a necessary complement of the present with its abounding anomalies. But a future life completely divorced from the past would be no deterrent from an ignoble career, and no incentive to the pursuit of righteousness. So far from impressing us with the solemnity of the present life, and the awful significance of all its parts, it would rather bring it into contempt, and would thus have a decidedly mischievous effect. There is much to be said, from various points of view,

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in behalf of immortality; but a life beginning, just as this began, with no residue of a former state, even in the shape of reminiscence, has nothing to commend it: it would simply be a Sisyphean labour.

2. Whether we shall recognise each other hereafter really turns on the simpler question, whether we shall recognise ourselves. If the latter question should be answered in the affirmative, we need have no anxiety at all in regard to the former. For if the individual retain the consciousness of his personal identity, he will be able to report, and so reveal himself to others. Mutual recognition thus becomes a possibility, and as much a certainty, indeed, as immortality itself. Possibly, when we cross the threshold of the other world, we may not just at once light on the friends whom most we long to meet. Who knows but it may be necessary to search for them over a vast area, or in a countless throng? But, in the course of eternity, with all the facilities of intercommunication which presumably exist in the spirit-land, and presumably surpass any of which we have experience here, notwithstanding the amazing extension of these which we have witnessed in modern times, we shall have ample opportunity for

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prosecuting such investigations as may be necessary. But it may be that after all we shall find those whom we seek without very much trouble, especially if the quest be mutual. Perhaps even Whittier's expectation was not too sanguine, and, like him, I shall

"find myself by hands familiar beckoned
Unto my fitting place."

III.

But what say the Scriptures? Their teaching on the question is by no means explicit. But the belief to which the heart is naturally prone, that in the world to come "we shall know even as we are known," they, on the whole, decidedly favour, both directly and indirectly, by their references to the future life. If they do not formally affirm it, it is only because they take it for granted.

1. On this particular question the testimony of the Old Testament necessarily takes a secondary place. For the belief in a personal immortality worthy of the name came gradually, and had not yet established itself triumphantly in the Scriptures of the older Canon. It was commonly believed, indeed, that the soul continued to exist after death, but only in a state of depressed vitality, having passed into "a land of darkness and of the shadow of death, a land of thick darkness, as darkness

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itself; a land of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness."¹ There are passages which even affirm that "the dead know not anything,"² that their love, and their hatred, and their envy are perished.³ An existence thus devoid of intellectual and moral content could be no object of desire. It was simply a shell from which the kernel had been extracted. So far from having passed into the immediate presence of God, the dead were believed to have fallen out of His fellowship altogether, and to be incapable of praising Him; and so death had a special horror, not for the ungodly, but for the pious.⁴ It was only when, with a heightened appreciation of the value of the individual soul, the faith in a genuine immortality arose, that the question, shall we know each other hereafter? could be effectually dealt with, or even urged with any persistency.

But even in the Old Testament, as there are passages which venture to hope for the continued fellowship of the soul with God, there are some that distinctly favour the idea that the spirits of the departed are capable of mutual recognition. The dead were, by a

¹ Job x, 21-22. ² Ecclesiastes ix, 5. ³ Ecclesiastes ix, 6.

⁴ Psalms cxv, 17.

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common expression, said to be "gathered unto their fathers." Did this just mean that they were laid in the family burying-ground? No; it seems to have meant that even in Sheol there was a grouping of individuals according to families; that the passing soul found its way to such as were nearest and dearest to it, and that there was some sort of fellowship re-established between it and them. With regard to his child, David could say, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." In the fourteenth chapter of Isaiah there is an imaginative description of the arrival of the mighty king of Babylon in the nether world. The spirits that were there before him greet him derisively with the question, "Art thou also become weak as we are? art thou become like unto us?" This representation at least shows that it was a belief of the writer, and presumably of others also, that souls passing into Sheol could be identified. It may have been no more than a popular belief; but still, so far as it goes, it proves that even to the Old Testament the recognition in the nether world of one soul by another was no alien idea.

2. But what has the New Testament to say on the question? In particular, what light has Christ Himself shed on the problem?

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(a) He speaks of many coming from the north and from the south, from the east and from the west, to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven. Thus He seems to sanction the belief that the patriarchs will be recognised by those who are, from time to time, introduced to their fellowship. In recent times we have been asked to believe that these reputed sires of the Hebrew race were no historical personages; but, even if they were not, Christ's saying at least shows that He believed not merely in the continued existence of the dead, but also in a fellowship between the dead of successive generations, and even of generations far apart. He also spoke of Lazarus as having been conveyed by angels to Abraham's bosom. Surely Lazarus would know in whose bosom he was laid, and Abraham who it was that was laid in his bosom.

(b) On the Mount of Transfiguration, Moses and Elias are said to have appeared to Christ, and conversed with him. Centuries had passed since either lived on the earth, yet their connection with it was not forgotten. Moses was still known as Moses, and Elias as Elias. Whether the scene should be interpreted as an historical occurrence, or simply as the

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symbolical expression of the great idea that the law, as represented by Moses, and the prophets, as represented by Elijah, do homage to Christ, and retire in His favour, that He alone, the beloved Son of God, may teach and rule, the fact remains that the authors of the first three Gospels, and the early Church, which received their narratives, and also the Christian disciples from whom they received the tradition (for none of the synoptic evangelists, who alone record it, was a witness of the spectacle), believed in the identity of souls as unbroken by death, or by the lapse of centuries, and in the consequent possibility of their being distinguished from, and recognised by, one another.

(c) When Christ spoke of many sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven, He employed a current representation. But He made a distinct contribution of His own to their knowledge of the future when he told His disciples that He was going to "prepare a place" for them, and would come again and take them to Himself, that where He was there they might be also. So they would know Him, and would also know each other hereafter. Their blessedness would consist in their being with Him, but partly in their continued fellowship

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with their former comrades. The very idea of the Father's house distinctly implies that the inmates would know each other. A strange home it would be if they did not! This address is peculiar, it is true, to the Fourth Gospel; but there is an equivalent to the promise it contains in the words reported to have been uttered at the Last Supper: "I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine till I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." For here also Jesus points to a time when He and His would be reunited in a blessed and enduring fellowship.

(*d*) In view of the prominence given by Christ through His whole ministry, and in all its parts, to the redeeming love of God, and to the love which is the sum of all the commandments, is it unreasonable to think that, if He really revealed the mind of God, provision will be made for saving love from the ruin with which it is threatened by death, and for reuniting sundered hearts? If God is love, and accordingly makes the production of love His chief aim in all His dealings with us, He cannot possibly make light of the holy affection which binds His children to each other any more than of the devotion which binds them to Himself; and, therefore,

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He cannot be expected to view with satisfaction the eternal separation of hearts that have once learned to love each other.

If we form our idea of God, not from that department of the universe in which physical forces operate, but from the world of humanity (and this we are justified in doing in view of the fact that humanity is the flower of creation), we are encouraged to believe that, in spite of the havoc continually wrought by death in the world of our affections, a way will be found to conserve in another state the interests dear to love. God was interpreted by Christ, not in the terms of physical force, but in those of love, and so interpreted with a magnificent confidence. And, because He believed that God is most truly discerned in the love of which we all know something, and of which the purest and the best know most, He was not dismayed at the prospect of death, and taught His disciples also to fear it not, inasmuch as the heavenly Father does not forsake His children, even when they go down into the grave, to all appearance crushed beneath a merciless necessity!

As the first Ingersoll lecturer remarks, "It is only as an inference from a given interpretation of the universe that belief in the future

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life can defend itself. The belief stands or falls with the moral idea of the universe."¹ The fatherly love of God, as revealed by Jesus Christ, is at once the most emphatic affirmation of a divine moral order, and our surest, as well as our most cheerful, guide along the way, confessedly dark, that lies between us and the beyond. Christianity, as a whole, bids us, with no uncertain tone, trust it as "creation's final law," trust it

"Though nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravin, shriek against the creed";

and so hold fast the belief that, as our beloved still live in God, and to God, they are not lost to us either, nor we to them, and, when the morning breaks, they and we shall stand disclosed in each other's presence. Though "our knowledge of that life is small," and "the eye of faith is dim," yet as Christians we cannot but indulge the "pleasing hope" with which the late poet-laureate, after much travail, comforted himself:—

"I shall know him when we meet :

And we shall sit at endless feast,
Enjoying each the other's good";

which Newman appropriated in the more familiar stanza :

¹ "Immortality and the New Theodicy," p. 46.

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“So long Thy power hath blessed me, sure it still
Will lead me on

O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till

The night is gone,

And with the morn those angel faces smile,

Which I have loved long since and lost awhile”;

and which Lady Nairne endorsed in the line
well known to her countrymen :

“We'll meet and aye be fain in the land o' the leal.”

IV.

But, as there were those who believed in a future life before Christ appeared, there were those also who believed in the mutual recognition of the dead, for the one hope really includes the other. “What would not a man give,” exclaims Socrates, “if he might converse with Orpheus and Musaeus and Hesiod and Homer? Nay, if this be true, let me die again and again. I too shall have a wonderful interest in a place where I can converse with Palamedes, and Ajax the son of Telamon, and other heroes of old, who have suffered death through an unjust judgment; there will be no small pleasure, as I think, in comparing my own sufferings with theirs. . . . What would not a man give, O judges, to be able to examine the leader of the great Trojan expedition; or Odysseus or Sisyphus, or numberless others, men and women too! What infinite

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delight would there be in conversing with them and asking them questions!"¹ Death might conceivably be "a state of nothingness and utter unconsciousness"; but on the assumption that it is rather "a change and migration of the soul from this world to another," Socrates expects that the departed will recognise each other, and also enjoy each other's society. His idea of Elysium is not essentially different from the Hebrew or the Christian conception of Paradise. The Greek poets, sages, and heroes are to him what Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were to the Jew; what "the glorious company of the apostles" and "the noble army of martyrs" are to "the holy Church throughout all the world." Communion with the best is thus, in the opinion of the best, a chief element in the blessed hope of the future life.

¹ Jowett's "Plato," Vol. I, p. 355.

CHAPTER VIII.

Righteousness and Resignation.

THE will of God, in its more comprehensive sense, includes, so far as we are concerned, both what He wills that we should do in relation to Him, and what He chooses to do Himself in regard to us. In view of the fact that the two previous petitions of the Lord's Prayer, "Hallowed be Thy name," "Thy kingdom come," refer, indirectly at least, to the active recognition of God by man, the presumption is that, as it stands there, the aspiration, "Thy will be done," concerns itself with the will of God as addressed to man in the form of moral precepts, although it would be unwarrantable to deny the possibility of a more comprehensive reference. But, when Jesus in Gethsemane uttered the words, the will of God in which He expressed His acquiescence, consisted, not in any commandment, but in His own sufferings and death, as divinely appointed, and therefore required a passive rather than an active obedience.

The extent to which sin prevails shows how

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far the human will is at variance with the divine, as revealed in the law of righteousness; but, when we pray "Thy will be done," we profess a desire that this baleful discord should everywhere come to an end; and, of course, if sincere, a determination also that, so far as we are concerned, it shall cease, God helping us. For some who are the slaves of sin, it is peculiarly hard to accept the divine will as the law of their life, as hard as it is (to use figures of a high authority) for the Ethiopian to change his skin, or the leopard his spots, or for a camel to go through the eye of a needle; and by all, even by such as are most virtuously and piously disposed, the obedience required is, in some instances, felt to be so exacting that we shrink from the sacrifice involved, or only by a supreme effort force ourselves to comply.

But we have a duty, not merely in regard to what God enjoins upon us, but also in relation to what He is Himself pleased to do; and in the latter case the duty may tax our powers no less severely than in the former. Indeed, there are not a few whose supreme difficulty in relation to God has arisen, not in connection with any of His commandments, which are transparently just and good, the glorified dictates of our own conscience, but in

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consequence of the hardships imposed upon them by unpropitious events, which seem inconsistent with the divine love or justice. Whether to perform what God enjoins, or to accept His providential will, proves to any one the harder task, depends partly on his own moral disposition, and partly on the nature of his experience. A good man has far less difficulty, of course, than a man of depraved propensities, in executing the commandments of God ; and, as the characters of men differ, so, and scarcely less, do their experiences vary, in respect of the endurance and self-denial which they demand.

Toward those events which are of a painful or disagreeable character it is obviously impossible to feel just as we do toward such as are a source of immediate gratification. But our relation to events does not end with the natural impression which they produce upon the heart. By making an unpleasant experience an object of reflection, we assume a new relation toward it, and also toward God Himself, under whose eye it occurred—a moral relation, either of antagonism or of submission.

If all events be regarded as answering in an equal manner and degree to the will of God, our difficulty in accepting them as an

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expression of His will is, on moral grounds, greatly increased; it becomes an impossibility indeed. But are we really required to endorse all events as equally significant of the divine will? Some of these are, as we know, the fruit of human sin, others of human infirmity. Such events, if they in any way correspond to the divine will, certainly do not express it absolutely, but at the most with a qualification. Again, a single event, if it express the will of God in any sense at all, cannot express it to the same extent as would the whole chain, of which it is no more than a link. Nor can the mere means be the will of God equally with the end which it subserves. Still less can an infinitesimal part of the means claim to be as worthy of our respect and reverence as the grand result in which the whole providential process culminates. Being one and indivisible, the will of God cannot be properly appreciated unless grasped in its integrity; and, since it cannot be so grasped by the finite intellect of man, it cannot be properly appreciated by him. It is only by faith that we can say "Thy will be done," since, except in those cases where we have a definite event in view, we are thereby committing ourselves to what is for us an infinite aggregate of unknown particulars.

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If it is unfair to any man to judge his workmanship before it has received the finishing-touch, and express to his satisfaction, or at least as nearly to his satisfaction as possible, the idea which he meant to realise, it would be still more unjust to take one from the countless details incidental to the progress of that vast design which requires all time for its development, and judge it as if it were the will of God in the same sense as that "far off divine event to which the whole creation moves." Of some things, which should never have occurred at all, inasmuch as they involve a breach of the moral law, and are therefore worthy of reprobation, we are manifestly entitled to say that, if they in any way represent the will of God, they do not answer to it in the same sense as events which are the product of a holy human will acting in accordance with the divine. And of all the particulars in which it is expressed, and by which it is realised, none can possibly represent the one absolute will of God so as to be perfectly identical with it, and therefore none has an unqualified claim upon our allegiance. As the meaning of a sentence is modified by the paragraph, and the meaning of a word by the sentence, in which it occurs, so the divine import of every single event

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is modified by the context, by all that goes before and all that comes after.

Yet the will of God has a necessary relation to all events, even to those which conceal it, or, from one point of view, contradict it; for all occur in a world created and governed by Him, and in accordance with ultimate principles which are of His appointment. Even in regard to crimes which shock our moral sense, it may not be altogether impious to say "Thy will be done," since it was at least the will of God that the malefactor should be entrusted with the power which he has, on his own responsibility, misapplied. The various losses which he sustained Job traced to the hand of God, although some were due, not to the operation of merely natural causes, such as the lightning and the tempest, with which man had nothing whatever to do, but to human violence in the forms of rapine and bloodshed. And in this he has been justified by the piety of succeeding ages, which has in similar circumstances endorsed his confession, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away." According to the point of view from which it is regarded, the same event may either be in accordance with, or in opposition to, the will of God. A blunder or a crime, it may yet be, like

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the crucifixion of Jesus, a divine dispensation, fraught with blessing to humanity.

How we should be affected toward God, who has by His will constituted the world, and so made Himself in a manner responsible for all events occurring within its bounds, is a vital question of personal religion. How we actually are affected, whether pleasantly or unpleasantly, is a question easily answered ; only we are not all affected alike, nor always in the same way. For the Supreme Power does not always present itself in the same aspect, being at one time friendly, at another unfriendly, if we may judge by the immediate impressions, of an opposite character, which it makes upon our sensibility. But how we are affected toward God by any event is not to be confounded with the nature of the impression, as pleasant or unpleasant, which it produces. One may be pleasantly affected by an event and yet, for lack of faith, reverence, or gratitude, be, even in respect of it, disaffected toward God, while another may be painfully affected by an event, and nevertheless well affected toward the Most High, being ready, despite his experience, to acknowledge His absolute moral perfection.

Even when disaffected toward the Divine Being, men may be so in a greater or a less

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degree. They may simply be, by reason of inevitable ignorance, perplexed or bewildered ; or, through the uncharitableness of their own heart, they may entertain unworthy suspicions concerning the goodness of God ; or they may even go so far as to charge Him with unkindness or injustice. And, in like manner, when well affected, they may simply, as if stunned by the blow they have received, submit in silence, having no word of praise, if they have none of reproach, to utter ; or, with a loyalty unimpaired by their affliction, they may still say, as they did in happier days, "Blessed be the name of the Lord" ; or they may even have, in the midst of their tribulation, a joy in God mounting to rapture, and be able to say without any pretence :

"Though the fig tree shall not blossom,
Neither shall fruit be in the vines ;
The labour of the olive shall fail,
And the fields shall yield no meat ;
The flock shall be cut off from the fold,
And there shall be no herd in the stall :
Yet I will rejoice in the Lord,
I will joy in the God of my salvation."¹

In the mutations of our human experience there are events which, taken separately, offer some justification for each of these diverse attitudes of the soul. For at times the Supreme Power seems pitiless and inexorable ; a force

¹ Habakkuk iii, 17.

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amenable to neither reason nor justice ; working havoc in all directions, as if it were a mere machine ; cutting down men and women in their prime, while their lives are yet unspeakably precious ; parting with a ruthless hand the newly-wedded bride and bridegroom ; tearing the mother from her defenceless brood, or snatching the infant from its mother's breast ; letting loose the famine, the pestilence, and the earthquake on bewildered and panic-stricken populations ; undoing its own work continually, like another and a greater Penelope, as if it set no value whatever on its own choicest productions ; but, at other times genial and bright, benignant as a father, or even as an *alma mater*, "merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth," showering unmerited favours upon us, so that we cannot be thankful enough for all that we have received—for a body whose numberless parts are all working together in perfect and happy harmony ; for the various pleasures of the senses ; for the fascinating and ennobling pursuits of the intellect ; for the bliss of a perfect love ; for the amenities of home life ; for the manifold stimulus of social intercourse ; and for the spiritual elevation which accompanies the consciousness, not merely of duty discharged, but even of a duty to be done.

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Is our attitude, then, toward the Supreme Power to fluctuate with our experience? Shall we be alternately rebellious and submissive? distrustful and confiding? Is there not a certain disposition of the heart which is at all times unbecoming, and another that is always dutiful and appropriate?

“Methought that beauty and terror are only one, not two;
And the world has room for love, and death, and thunder, and dew;
And all the sinews of hell slumber in summer air;
And the face of God is a rock, but the face of rock is fair.
Beneficent streams of tears flow at the finger of pain;
And out of the cloud that smites, beneficent rivers of rain.”

If the Supreme Power be a merely physical force, a moral relation toward it, of any kind, is obviously precluded. With the pleasure or the pain it produced, our relation to it would terminate. We should have no duty toward it, and it would have none toward us. However much it might cause us to suffer, it could do us no wrong; nor, however great our good fortune might be, could it claim to have bestowed upon us any benefit, in the strict sense of the word. Hatred and love, resentment and devotion, would be equally out of place.

And to the Supreme Power, if possessed of a moral character, it were manifestly no less

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inconsistent to ascribe any inconsistency. Although our experience may vary from time to time, yet, in the cup presented to our lips, the bitter and the sweet are always blended in some proportion. Moreover, at the very moment when we happen to be rejoicing in a full tide of prosperity, there are others whose fortunes are at the lowest ebb; and when we are mourning in the depths, there are others exulting on the heights.

“The hour whose happy
Unalloy'd moments
I would eternalise,
Ten thousand mourners
Well pleased see end.
The bleak stern hour
Whose severe moments
I would annihilate,
Is pass'd by others
In warmth, light, joy.”

To our view, the world is continually changing, but not in reality. Caprice, or fickleness, is the very last charge that science would allow us to bring against the Ultimate Reality. Nature, and therefore Nature's God, is always and everywhere the same; if malevolent, always malevolent; if propitious, always propitious.

“High over space and time is a God,
A will never rocking, like man's, to and fro;
A thought that abides, though unseen the abode,
Inweaving with life its creations below;
Changing and shifting the All we inherit,
But changeless through all, one immutable Spirit!”

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Are we justified, then, in ascribing to the Supreme a moral character at all? It is not the outward and variable facts of his experience, but the greater and more durable fact of his own moral nature, that has led man to attribute such a character to the Divine Being. Are we, then, the victims of an illusion as truly when we ascribe to Him a full-orbed righteousness as the savage is who imputes to his idol his own vices? Is there no stable foundation on which to base the belief that the Power by which, and in which, we live has really a regard for moral distinctions, and is ever "making for righteousness," being itself righteous? How shall we explain the moral life of man, personal and social, which is the issue and crown of the whole world-process, if, in the Supreme Power, which has brought about this complex and venerable result, there be no such thing as truth, justice, or mercy?

If we are entitled to form our conception of the Eternal by the facts of experience, the highest, the noblest, and the most sacred are surely those to which we should assign the most decisive significance. And so we venture to identify God, not with mere force, but with Love, which is morality at its greatest intensity; and since He is always and every-

RESIGNATION.

where self-consistent, with a Love, not partial and variable, but universal and perpetual. If we ascribe a moral character to God at all, we cannot stop short of ascribing absolute goodness. To hold, as many do in their common thoughts, if not in their more deliberate theories, that God, though a moral being, is yet Himself the arch-Laodicean, being neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm, is a position logically untenable. For such as would not renounce faith in God altogether, there is no choice but to accept the grand proposition, in which revelation culminates, that God is love. Thus are we lifted above the plane on which opposite forces seem to be continually at war into the transcendental region where all is light, and there is no darkness. And, having obtained the vision of God as the absolutely good, we can at last say, with an unfeigned resignation, "Thy will be done," believing that, however hard it seem, and however regardless of those moral considerations which it is the glory of man at least to observe, and his shame to ignore, every single event, in so far as it is traceable to His will, admits of being reconciled with infinite love.

Let no one, then, presume to taunt us with fawning on the Tyrant if, even in our grief, we feel it would ill become us to say a

PIA DESIDERIA.

word that would detract from the glory of God. Let no one dare to reproach us with kissing the hand of the Oppressor if, while smarting under the sorest misfortunes, we yet try to school our perplexed and troubled heart into a reverent submission. It is no servility thus to honour the Power to which we owe our being, and all that makes us cling to life, together with those entrancing visions of truth and love and beauty which we see as yet but realised in part. Such fealty does honour not only to the One to whom it is tendered, but also to him who tenders it. Indeed, I know of nothing that so greatly redounds to the credit of man as that he, a being "of few days and full of trouble," should yet, even when bruised and battered in spirit, refuse to renounce his faith in the absolute goodness of the Almighty. It is not the meanest of men, but the noblest, with Jesus at their head, that have exemplified such an immovable steadfastness of devotion. And have they not a reason for their heroic faith? If God's will, as revealed to the conscience, be a holy will, requiring us "to do justly and to love mercy," what must His will be as expressed in His own dealings with us? Can it be other than the expression of a perfect righteousness? There can be no inconsistency

RESIGNATION.

between these two manifestations of His will, which must always be one and the same. Therefore we must either deny that He requires truth, justice, and mercy of us, or admit that in His own works He ever shows that same regard for moral considerations of which He has given proof in the law written by His own finger on the human heart. If the law of conscience is such that we can approve it with all our heart, and yield ourselves up to it enthusiastically, and in its exacting service realise our highest freedom, and enjoy the noblest sense of life, the course of events, as determined by the will of God, must be no less worthy of our confidence and consent. And with no less force we might argue that, if God be not good, and absolutely good, so that "o'er all His works His mercy is," there can be for us no such thing as moral obligation. He that with an unlimited authority commands us to do the right, to do it on all occasions, and at whatever cost, must be Himself utterly incapable of either injustice or unkindness; and only One who is Himself absolutely good can claim our absolute submission. All human heroism and devotion presuppose the faithfulness of God, and so help us to say, even in the darkest hour, "Thy will be done."

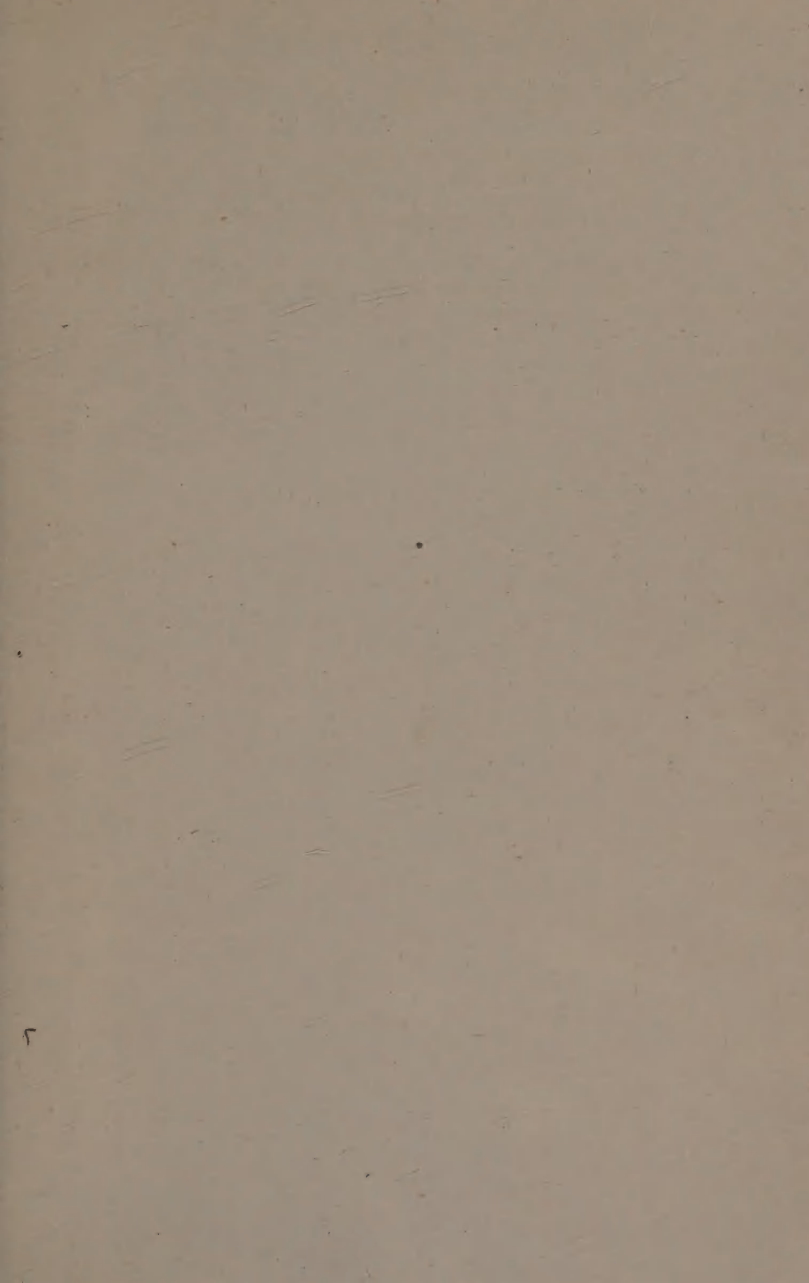
PIA DESIDERIA.

“To thrill with the joy of girded men,
To go on for ever, and fail, and go on again,
And be mauled to the earth and arise,
And contend for the shade of a word and a thing not
seen with the eyes :
With the half of a broken hope for a pillow at night,
That somehow the right is the right,
And the smooth shall bloom from the rough :
Lord, if that were enough ?”

Hay Nisbet & Co. Ltd., Printers, 73 Dunlop Street, Glasgow.

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